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ABSTRACT

The theme of the 1999 conference of the American reading Forum was "Literacy Transitions into the Next Millennium. Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?" The papers and sessions in this proceedings reflect members' interests ranging from affective issues to distance education, and from teaching college students to understanding beginning writing. The diversity of topics is perhaps indicative of the diversity of the field. Problems court sessions in the proceedings are: "Reader's Bill of Rights: Analyses, Issues, and Insights" (Laurie Elish-Piper and Others); "Distance Learning in Literacy Instruction: What's Happening Now? What Is Projected for the Next Millennium?" (Eunice N. Askov; Jane Hager; Regina Chatel); and "Reaction: Distance Learning in Literacy Instruction: What's Happening Now? What Is Projected for the Next Millennium?" (Susanne I. Lapp). Papers in the proceedings are: "Tuesdays with Morrie: A Primer for Literacy Educators" (Thomas Cloer, Jr.); "Comparison between the History of Writing and Children's Transition into Conventional Writing: Parallels and Divergences" (June E. Barnhart); "Linking Schools, Families, and Communities" (Sylvia Vardell; Nancy L. Hadaway; Jeanne M. Gerlach; John E. Jacobson); "Teaching Underprepared College Readers: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?" (Chester H. Laine; Michaeline Laine; Terry Bullock); and "What Are Children Learning about Police Officers from Children's Literature?" (Cindy Gillespie Hendricks; James E. Hendricks; Lauranne Beeler). Individual papers contain references. (NKA)

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AMERICAN READING FORUM

2000, VOLUME XX

LITERACY TRANSITIONS INTO THE NEXT MILLENNIUM:

Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

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Yearbook of the American Reading Forum

CS 014 164

ARF

2000, VOLUME XX

Editor

Richard J. Telfer
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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The *Yearbook of the American Reading Forum* is the official publication of the American Reading Forum. It includes papers recommended for publication by the Editorial Board from those submitted by presenters at forums, problems courts, and sessions of the American Reading Forum's Annual Conference.

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The *Yearbook of the American Reading Forum* contains selected papers and reactions to issues or papers presented at each year's annual meeting. The yearbook, a peer-reviewed publication, is indexed with major reference sources nationally. The yearbook is received by the membership of ARF as well as many major libraries in the United States.

Five copies of typewritten double-spaced manuscripts (approximately 5 to 20 pages) that follow current APA form should be submitted. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to Woodrow Trathen, Editor, American Reading Forum Yearbook, Edwin Duncan Hall, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.

Subscriptions to the *American Reading Forum Yearbook* are $20 (U.S.) per year; back issues are $5. Checks should be made payable to the American Reading Forum. Subscription requests and all related correspondence should be sent to Woodrow Trathen, Editor, American Reading Forum Yearbook, Edwin Duncan Hall, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.

(ISBN 0895-3562)

From The Editor

Volume XX of the *American Reading Forum Yearbook* contains papers that have been recommended by the Editorial Advisory Board from those submitted by authors who presented at the 1999 Annual Conference. The conference theme was *Literacy Transitions into the Next Millennium: Where have we been? Where are we going?* The papers in the volume reflect our members' interests ranging from affective issues to distance education, and from teaching college students to understanding beginning writing. The diversity of topics in these papers is perhaps indicative of the diversity of our field. The 2000 *American Reading Forum Yearbook* offers its readers the opportunity to look back and think ahead as we begin the new millennium.

As the American Reading Forum completes its 20th year and faces the challenges and possibilities of the new millennium, it might be interesting to look back at the *American Reading Forum Yearbook* as it has changed over those 20 years.

There have been a number of individuals involved in editing the *Yearbook*. For the first five years, George McNinch served as editor. In 1985, he was assisted by Gerard Lentini and Mary Creamer. For the next three years, Donavon Lumpkin, Mary Harshberger, and Peggy Ransom took over the editorial duties, with Joan Williams joining them for the 1988 volume. From 1989 through 1997, Bernie Hayes and Kay Camperell served as editors. I joined them for their last three years and then took over the editorship from 1998 through 2000.

The *Yearbook* has evolved over the past 20 years. In the early years, the *Yearbook* was larger than it has been in recent years. In the first five years, an average of 46 articles and 7 reactions were published each year. In the last five years, those numbers have changed to an average of fewer than 15 articles and about 2 reaction papers each year.

Obviously, the size and binding of the *Yearbook* has also undergone a number of changes. For the first eight years, the *Yearbook* was in an 8 1/2 x 11 inch format, with several different types of binding. Since 1989, the *Yearbook* has been an 6 x 9 inch format. The first volume pictured a Roman senator on the cover. For the next 7 issues, this drawing was replaced with one of the Forum in Rome. In 1989 the cover was revised to show a logo based on the American Reading Forum's initials and a representation of the Forum. Identification of the volume on the spine of the *Yearbook* began in 1990.

Over the twenty years, a total of 584 articles have been published, including 73 reaction papers. Approximately 415 individuals are represented as authors or co-authors (I say approximately because it is not always possible to match people due to name and location changes). Twelve individuals have had papers in 10 or more issues of the *Yearbook*, two in 17 issues and another two in 16. An additional 35 individuals have had papers in 5 or more issues of the *Yearbook*.

The authors represent 34 states as well as several other countries. The largest number of individuals have been affiliated with the states of Georgia and Ohio, with 68 and 45 different individuals, respectively, having authored or co-authored papers in the *Yearbook*. The states of Florida, Texas, Illinois, Louisiana, and Wisconsin each have more than 30 authors/co-authors represented, while Pennsylvania and Virginia have more than 20 each.

Over the years, the American Reading Forum Yearbook has published a variety of articles related to reading and literacy. The papers have reflected a diversity of thought, and have been presented in a variety of formats and styles. The range of papers, reflecting keynote sessions, Call to Forum discussions, problems courts, sessions, and reactions have provided a variety of ways to present and discuss ideas. I wish the editorial team from Appalachian State University success as they take over as editors. I am confident they will continue to enhance the quality of the papers and the presentation of the *Yearbook*.

American Reading Forum

Volume XX, 2000

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The Reader's Bill of Rights: Analyses, Issues, and Insights

Laurie Elish-Piper, Ramona W. Matthews,
Victoria J. Risko, Jerry L. Johns, JoAnn Bass,
Sheryl Dasinger, Barbara Illig-Aviles

Literacy teachers and teacher educators are currently under close scrutiny for their teaching methods, philosophical orientations, and the educational outcomes of their students. In this era of accountability and standards, many teachers find themselves struggling to reconcile what they believe about literacy learning and teaching with what legislators, the public, and the media advocate. Literacy educators often find themselves caught between two worlds as they read professional journals and attend university courses that support student-centered approaches to literacy education on the one hand, while they encounter back-to-basics approaches in the popular press on the other hand. In this politically charged time for literacy education, it becomes critical that educators discuss their beliefs, carefully analyze their reasons for these beliefs, and share their experiences and rationales with those beyond their own schools, colleges, and universities. In short, literacy educators must advocate for sound, meaningful, relevant literacy education for all students.

A highly literate society requires readers who not only can read, but who choose to read. In his book, *Better than Life,* Daniel Pennac (1999) describes how his own son went from being an avid reader who loved books to an adolescent who avoided and disliked reading. Pennac shares anecdotes and hypothesizes what factors might have contributed to his son's move away from reading and books. Based on his insights and experiences, Pennac offers a list of ten rights that he believes will prevent other children and adolescents from developing the same negative relationship with reading that his son did. The Reader's Bill of Rights states that readers have:

1. The right to not read.
2. The right to skip pages.
3. The right to not finish.
4. The right to reread.
5. The right to read anything.
6. The right to escapism.
7. The right to read anywhere.
8. The right to browse.
9. The right to read out loud.
10. The right to not defend your tastes. (Pennac, 1999, pp. 170-171)

Colin Harrison (1997) responds to Pennac's Bill of Rights by explaining, "Teachers have many responsibilities: to their students, to parents, to their employers, and ultimately, in a democracy, to the government" (p. 12). As teachers attempt to address these important responsibilities, coupled with the rights of readers, they must balance what they know about how children learn to read with the standards, expectations, and goals of stakeholders in education.

The Reader's Bill of Rights is deceptively simple upon first glance. After in-depth analysis and discussion, its complexity becomes more evident. The authors of this paper facilitated a Problems Court Session at the 1999 American Reading Forum Conference, and evidence of this complexity became even more pronounced after conversations among the facilitators and the Problems Court participants. This paper seeks to address three main purposes: (1) to provide results of a survey related to the Reader's Bill of Rights; (2) to discuss the outcomes of the Problem Court Session; and (3) to examine critical issues related to the Reader's Bill of Rights.

The Study: Methodology

Using Pennac's Reader's Bill of Rights, a survey instrument was developed (See Appendix). This survey was given to 268 teachers enrolled in literacy education courses at three universities in the midwestern and southern regions of the United States. Surveys included demographic information about each respondent's gender, professional position or goal, degree being sought, grade level (if currently teaching), and years of teaching experience. The remainder of the survey was divided into the following two sections: responding to the Reader's Bill of Rights about oneself and responding to the Reader's Bill of Rights about one's students. Responses were analyzed to determine frequency distributions and means. T-tests were also run on the data.

The following two research questions guided the study:

1. What are preservice and inservice teachers' views about the Reader's Bill of Rights for themselves as readers?

2. What are preservice and inservice teachers' views about the Reader's Bill of Rights for their students?

Results

The respondents to the survey were primarily female preservice teachers seeking a B.A. or B.S. degree in elementary education. Table 1 provides a breakdown of survey respondents in terms of gender. The majority of respondents were female (92.5%). Only 7.1 percent of respondents were males, and one respondent did not indicate gender.

Table 1

Gender of Respondents

	Number	Percent
Female	248	92.5
Male	19	7.1
No Response	1	0.4

N = 268

Most of the respondents were elementary teachers (62.3%), followed by middle school teachers (11.6%), special education teachers (10.4%), and other (10.4%). Only 4.9% of the respondents were secondary teachers. Table 2 provides information about the professional position or goal of respondents.

Table 2

Professional Position or Goal of Respondents

	Number	Percentage
Elementary School Teacher	167	62.3
Middle School Teacher	31	11.6
High School Teacher	13	4.9
Special Education Teacher	28	10.4
Other	28	10.4
No Response	1	0.4

N=268

Most of the respondents were pursuing baccalaureate degrees (59.3%). A moderate number of respondents were pursuing master's degrees (29.9%), and 8.6% of the respondents were pursuing doctoral degrees. Table 3 shows the degrees sought by respondents to the survey.

Table 3

Degree Sought

	Number	Percentage
Certification	1	0.4
BA or BS	159	59.3
MA or MS	80	29.9
EdD or PhD	23	8.6
Non-Degree	4	1.5
No Response	1	0.4

N=268

Table 4 shows the breakdown of respondents who teach at each of the grade levels from K-12. It should be noted that since the majority of respondents were preservice teachers, the "Not Teaching" category was the most common response.

Table 4

Teaching Assignment

	Number	Percentage
Not Teaching	144	53.7
Pre-K	5	1.9
Kindergarten	9	3.4
Grade 1	15	5.6
Grades 2-3	20	7.5
Grades 4-5	13	4.9
Grades 6-8	24	9.0
Grades 9-12	15	5.6
Other	22	8.2
No Response	1	0.4

N = 268

Table 5 (on next page) shows the years of teaching experience for the survey respondents. Again, since the majority of the respondents were preservice teachers, the most common response was "0 years of experience." Newer teachers with one to three years of experience also comprised a substantial percentage of respondents (16.0%). The next largest group of respondents was teachers with four to ten years of experience (15.7%).

Table 5

Years of Teaching Experience

	Number	Percentage
0 years	148	55.2
1-3 years	43	16.0
4-10 years	42	15.7
11-15 years	10	3.7
More than 15 years	24	9.0
No Response	1	0.4

N = 268

Table 6 shows the average ratings for each of the rights. The first column reflects what the respondents believe for themselves. The second column reflects what the respondents believe for students. The third column shows T-tests comparing the two. Significant differences exist on all of the rights except for "the right to reread" and "the right to read out loud." On all of the remaining rights, teachers afforded themselves the rights while they tended to be less convinced that their students should have such rights. In other words, teachers felt they had the rights to "choose not to read," "skip pages," "not finish," "read anything," "read for escapism," "read anywhere," "browse," and "not to defend their tastes," while they were less sure that their students had these same rights.

A number of possible explanations can be posited; however, they are just speculations since the survey did not ask for respondents to explain or support their responses. First, as adults, respondents may feel they are entitled and capable to make choices about reading, not reading, or choosing what to read. Furthermore, since respondents answered about their own students, they may have focused on academic reading—meaning that students in their classrooms do not have these rights when it comes to academic reading within the classroom. These hypotheses need to be confirmed by future research that specifically asks respondents to explain their responses and the contexts surrounding them.

Table 6

Respondents' Views of Reader's Bill of Rights for themselves and their students

Right	Teacher M (SD)	Student M (SD)	T (266)
1. Choose not to read	2.09 (1.11)	3.52 (1.02)	-17.70**
2. Skip pages	1.89 (.92)	2.95 (1.01)	-15.41**
3. Not finish	1.81 (.84)	2.89 (1.05)	-15.63**
4. Reread	1.22 (.44)	1.22 (.50)	.12
5. Read anything	1.38 (.73)	2.38 (1.21)	-13.76**
6. Escapism	1.65 (.81)	1.88 (. 94)	-5.17**
7. Read anywhere	1.60 (.87)	1.91 (1.02)	-6.00**
8. Browse	1.35 (.54)	1.45 (.60)	-2.95**
9. Read out loud	1.80 (. 95)	1.81 (.96)	-.42
10. Not have to defend taste	1.46 (.74)	1.78 (.93)	-6.56**

(1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree)

N = 268, ** p < .001

Table 7 shows the significant differences between elementary 7 preservice and inservice teachers and middle/secondary preservice and inservice teachers in relation to the rights of their students. Those teachers who identified themselves as "special education" or "other" teachers were not included in this analysis since it was not possible to identify the grade level(s) of students they taught. The elementary teachers tended to disagree that their students' had rights "to choose not to read," "skip pages," and "not finish" more so than secondary educators. Perhaps this difference can be explained by the emphasis on learning to read in the elementary grades and reading to learn in the middle/secondary grades. In addition, the older ages of middle/secondary students may be a factor in acknowledging their rights more so than the rights of young children in the elementary grades.

Table 7

Elementary and Middle/Secondary Teachers' Beliefs of Rights for Their Students

Right	Elementary Mean (SD)	Middle/ Secondary Mean (SD)	F (1,209)
11. Choose not to read	3.65 (.93)	3.31 (1.12)	7.08**
12. Skip pages	3.13 (.96)	2.68(1.03)	12.73**
13. Not to finish	3.06(1.04)	2.61(1.00)	11.96**

(1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree)

N=211, ** p<.001

Discussion

Surveys offer strengths and limitations when used in research. The main limitations of this study are related to the design of the survey. First, the survey did not elicit information to support or explain the respondents' thinking when answering questions on the survey. Second, the relatively small number of inservice teachers in the pool of respondents made it difficult to make comparisons between preservice and inservice teachers to see if differences do exist. In addition, the surveys were administered by the researchers in their own classes and colleagues' classes. Since the surveys were given during class sessions, respondents may have answered based on what they thought was expected by the professor, or they may have responded based on academic reading rather than including recreational reading in their considerations. In addition, only three universities were included in the study; a broader range of respondents across the United States would provide a more comprehensive view of the Reader's Bill of Rights. In addition, follow up interviews or focus groups with a sub-set of participants would allow for clarification or explanation of the responses and the related issues. Finally, student voices are missing from the present study. Including students in grades 4-12 in future research will provide greater insight into the Reader's Bill of Rights and related issues from students' perspectives.

Discussion of Issues Raised at Problems Court Session

The researchers presented the results of the survey, along with the survey instrument itself at a Problems Court Session. Approximately a dozen educators attended the session in addition to the seven researchers. After sharing the results of the study, the researchers elicited comments, questions, and insights from participants. The goals of the Problems Court Session were to (1) share results of the study, (2) critique the design of the study and the survey instrument, and (3) to examine key issues, assumptions, and challenges related to the study and the Reader's Bill of Rights. Some of the major issues from the Problems Court session are discussed in the following sections of this article.

Reflection for Teachers and Preservice Teachers

The researchers noted that the survey respondents typically wanted to engage in discussion after completing the survey. While the researchers reported that such conversations occurred, these conversations were not considered as part of the data of the study. Problems Court Session participants suggested that such discussion and reflection might be considered an extension of the survey, leading to a focus group wherein researchers could collect narrative descriptions of the respondents' thoughts, feelings, and insights related to the Reader's Bill of Rights. In addition, several participants suggested that the Reader's Bill of Rights appeared to be a powerful tool for promoting reflection among teachers, beyond its use as a survey.

Reading Contexts

The issue of reading contexts was raised as the most significant question still remaining about the Reader's Bill of Rights. In other words, would respondents answer differently if academic or recreational reading contexts were specified for themselves and for their students? In addition, would specifying the types of texts (e.g., textbooks, literature, self-selected texts, electronic texts) influence responses?

Rights for All or Conditional Rights?

Participants raised the issues of whether the rights applied to all readers regardless of age and competency. This issue aligns with the results of the survey in terms of the greater likelihood for middle/secondary teachers to afford students the right to choose not to read, skip pages, and not to finish than elementary teachers. One participant raised the question of whether a first-grade child should have the same right to choose not to read as an adult? Others asked if the rights should differ in school contexts and out-of-school contexts? Another key issue focused on whether a teacher who believes children learn to read by reading can reconcile this belief with a reader's right to choose not to read. The general consensus among the Problems Court participants was that the rights were conditional in terms of age and reading context, and they must be balanced with responsibilities.

Range of Respondents

The present study included preservice and inservice teachers only. Clearly these individuals can provide important and interesting insights into the Reader's Bill of Rights; however, student voices were noticeably absent from the study. Participants suggested including students in grades 4-12 to gain insight into the rights they believe they have. In addition, participants suggested including librarians, parents, and the general public in the survey to provide a broader view of the Reader's Bill of Rights and related issues.

Standards and Curriculum

Participants raised issues about the current focus on standards in education and how this might influence respondents on the survey. Because of standardized curricula in an increasing number of schools, teachers have fewer choices about what to do in their classrooms. As a result, many participants felt teachers and students may not truly have complete control over the rights inside their classrooms. Participants tended to feel that students should have all of the rights when outside of the classroom, but they suggested that some of the rights (i.e., right not to read, right to skip pages, right not to finish the book) did not mesh with the goals and expectations for students during the school day.

Engagement

Participants suggested that future research on the Reader's Bill of Rights should address engagement. They argued that students often become disengaged because of the texts educators require them to read and the types of reading provided for them in school, as was the case with Pennac's son (1999). One participant noted, "if teachers believe all students must read, the questions should be: What can teachers do to engage their students in reading? How can teachers make their students choose to read and want to read?" Another participant noted, "the word 'choose' makes me think teachers need to give students more choices."

Controversy and Censorship

Some participants raised issues of controversial readings and censorship and how these fit into the Reader's Bill of Rights. One participant noted, "when kids find something they really like such as Harry Potter, adults try to take it away." What does the right to read anything really mean? Certainly social norms come into play regarding types of reading materials that are out-of-place in schools (e.g., pornography, hate literature), but does this also apply to popular culture texts (e.g., comic books, teen magazines)? Participants felt the reading context was the bottom-line in making such decisions, with more rights afforded to the reader outside of school than in the classroom. Session participants then struggled with the teacher's role in the classroom in terms of guiding students toward quality reading. While the group was split on how much teachers should intervene and control student selection of texts, all participants agreed that as teachers, we must provide support and guidance to students, including in text selection. The form that support and guidance should take was viewed as variable, taking into consideration the age/level of the student and the reading context.

Considerations for the Classroom

Several of the participants posed questions about how K-12 classrooms would change if the Reader's Bill of Rights was acknowledged in all classrooms. Others asked how preservice and graduate education courses would change. At present, most teacher education programs are very prescriptive in terms of the classes, experiences, and competencies required. The question was then posed about what this type of prescribed program models for future teachers. Participants queried whether there was a way to give students the rights but also to help them develop and fulfill responsibilities that accompany rights. For example, is it viable for a teacher to tell students, "If you choose not to read the text, that's your choice. You'll still be responsible, however, to meet the outcomes."

Critical Theories

Critical theorists advocate status for the reader and the provision of authority of choice (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993; Shor & Pari, 1999). Accepting choice and readers' rights also begs the argument for a child's right to choose not to read. One could argue that there are many ways of knowing (Leland & Harste, 1994) and different ways to come to know. Furthermore, one can think of texts more broadly beyond just the textbooks and required readings in school. Thus choosing not to read does not necessarily mean loss of knowing or does it? Can a teacher who believes that education is a form of social justice (Ayers, Quinn, & Hunt, 1998) support students' choices not to read (Edelsky, 1996)? Participants described the tensions between what they believe as educators and what they feel they must do as teachers. This tension is not uncommon as teachers begin to examine fundamental educational questions such as "what is worth teaching?" and "who has the right to make this decision?"

Participants argued that educators must consider the rights of the child in life vs. the rights of the student in the classroom. In other words, while children may have all of the rights described by Pennac (1999), they may not have all of the rights while in the classroom. The struggle between authority and rights is a major dilemma for all educators who seek to empower and give students choice, while still providing sound literacy instruction.

Closing Thoughts

Based on the findings of the study and the Problems Court Session, the authors argue that additional research is needed to examine the Reader's Bill of Rights more fully. This research must consider the contexts for reading and provide opportunities for respondents to explain the reasons for their answers. In addition, by including student voices, librarians, parents, and the general public, more insights can be gained on how these various stakeholders in literacy education view the issues surrounding the Reader's Bill of Rights.

Many fundamental questions still remain regarding the rights and responsibilities of readers and literacy educators. The Reader's Bill of Rights articulated by Pennac (1999) provides one way to look at the rights of readers, but many questions remain, such as: Do other important rights exist? Who determines the rights? Do the rights come with responsibilities? While surveys and conversations such as the Problems Court session described in this article may help educators begin to examine their beliefs and practices related to the rights and responsibilities of readers in their classrooms, such dialogues must continue long after the conference has ended.

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Appendix

Reader's Bill of Rights Survey

1. **Your gender:** **A.** female **B.** male

2. **Professional position or goal:**
   - **A.** elementary teacher
   - **B.** middle school teacher
   - **C.** secondary teacher
   - **D.** special education teacher
   - **E.** other (specify) ______________________________

3. **Degree being sought:**
   - **A.** B.A. or B.S.
   - **B.** M.A. or M.S.
   - **C.** Ed.D. or Ph.D.
   - **D.** None

4. **If a teacher, what grade do you currently teach?**
   - **A.** Pre-K
   - **B.** K
   - **C.** 1st
   - **D.** 2nd or 3rd
   - **E.** 6-8
   - **F.** 9-12
   - **G.** other (specify)______________________

5. **Teaching Experience:**
   - **A.** 1-3 years
   - **B.** 4-10 years
   - **C.** over 10 years
   - **D.** over 15 years

Daniel Pennac, in his book, *Better Than Life*, proposed the Reader's Bill of Rights. The researchers would like to know your thoughts and feelings about these proposed rights.

As a reader, I believe I have:		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The right not to read	A	B	C	D	E
2.	The right to skip pages	A	B	C	D	E
3.	The right not to finish	A	B	C	D	E
4.	The right to reread	A	B	C	D	E
5.	The right to read anything	A	B	C	D	E
6.	The right to escapism	A	B	C	D	E
7.	The right to read anywhere	A	B	C	D	E
8.	The right to browse	A	B	C	D	E
9.	The right to read out loud	A	B	C	D	E
10.	The right to not defend your tastes	A	B	C	D	E

As a teacher or prospective teacher, I believe my students should have:						
11.	The right not to read	A	B	C	D	E
12.	The right to skip pages	A	B	C	D	E
13.	The right not to finish	A	B	C	D	E
14.	The right to reread	A	B	C	D	E
15.	The right to read anything	A	B	C	D	E
16.	The right to escapism	A	B	C	D	E
17.	The right to read anywhere	A	B	C	D	E
18.	The right to browse	A	B	C	D	E
19.	The right to read out loud	A	B	C	D	E
20.	The right to not defend your tastes	A	B	C	D	E

Distance Learning in Literacy Instruction: What's Happening Now? What's Projected for the Next Millennium?

Eunice N. Askov, Jane M. Hager, Regina G. Chatel

Distance education is a reality for many teacher preparation programs, while for others, the potential is still being explored. Distance learning programs can range from a simple televised course to complete degree programs using interactive videoconferencing or the World Wide Web in an asynchronous format (Hager & Eanet, 1996). Literacy education courses, as part of teacher preparation at various levels, are also being delivered via distance education.

Distance education is growing rapidly as a means of delivering instruction primarily in higher education. In a recent study issued by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics (1999), the percentage of higher education institutions offering education courses outside the traditional classroom has increased from 33% in 1995 to 44% in 1998. Of the four-year public institutions, 79% were offering distance education classes in 1997-98. Distance education course offerings and enrollments have nearly doubled between 1994-95 and 1997-98. So have the number of degree and certificate programs offered. Most institutions are using the Internet, increasing from 28% of the institutions in 1995 to 60% in 1998.

Some universities are joining the distance education initiative because they see it as part of their land-grant mission. The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (1999), for example, issued "An Open Letter to the Presidents and Chancellors of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges" in which 24 presidents and chancellors stated that public research universities must become leaders in creating the "learning society" through delivering lifelong learning. The letter recognizes that information technologies are tools for "tailoring instruction to societal, organizational, and individual needs." It also recognizes that the learning society must be inclusive and ensure access for all members of society.

A smaller number of private higher education institutions are also beginning to explore delivery of instruction by distance education but usually within their own geographic area. Some are developing distance education components within resident instruction to give their students more flexibility in taking classes. Distance education offers access to students who may be fully employed during the day, who are home-bound with small children, who are place-bound and cannot leave the geographic area to study, or who are otherwise unable to attend traditional classes.

Some for-profit organizations entered the market of delivering distance education as a business before public and private higher education institutions broadened their missions to encompass distance education. These organizations frequently use professors from public and private colleges and universities without incurring the overhead costs associated with buildings, faculty and staff support, benefits, and so forth. In fact, distance education has become a big business in the private sector as employers are realizing the importance of lifelong learning for their employees.

Similarly, public and private higher education institutions are competing for students globally in all sorts of programs including teacher education. The purpose of this Problems Court was to explore three different approaches to distance education in teacher education, including literacy education, by three different types of higher education institutions.

Conceptual Framework

The growing popularity of distance education raises the issue about what is learning. Different forms of distance education presume different definitions of distance education. Burge (1988) asserts that most distance education courses are built on the transmission model of learning since distance education has its origins in correspondence study. Correspondence courses were the earliest form of distance education in which knowledge is delivered from the university professor via written materials to the student (Sherry, 1996). With the advent of two-way distance technologies, such as audio- and videoconferencing, a constructivist learning environment became possible. Internet technology now makes possible learning in a social environment since learners can be linked in a "virtual" classroom with a professor. The World Wide Web has opened up opportunities for social learning leading to the development of higher order thinking and learning.

In the constructivist view, learning is socially constructed and situated in a specific context. One of the tenets of what has become known as situated learning theory is that learning occurs in collaboration with others, in the particular social world in which they find themselves (Bruner, 1990). Learners construct new knowledge and skills through interacting with others and the environment and then reflecting upon these experiences. Learning that closely resembles the real world of the participants occurs as a social process involving others.

Constructivist learning, including the concept of situated learning, has great relevance to distance education programs. Instructional activities become meaningful to the extent that they are needed in interactions with others and with the content to be learned. Brown (1998) explores how constructivism can offer a philosophical base for learning in distance education programs. Her premise is that interactivity and social learning must be built into the course design. Her monograph is a good resource for faculty newly involved in distance education.

If the philosophy that learning is a social process—in which individuals learn through interaction with others—is accepted, then interactivity is essential. Lauzon (1992) faults most distance education programs for failing to include dialogue and integration of personal experiences into instruction. Since learner engagement is crucial, Lauzon argues for a balance between "objective knowledge and subjective experience" in recognizing the criticality of learner engagement in learning (p. 34).

Moore & Kearsley (1996) have argued that distance education requires new skills on the part of teachers. Likewise, the faculty who teach future and current teachers also need to learn new skills, especially how to incorporate contructivist learning strategies as the philosophical base for distance education courses. Other issues that must be resolved in undertaking distance education include new methods of assessment and evaluation (Shaeffer & Farr, 1993), curriculum development, instructional methodology, and other factors such as teacher versus student control, faculty satisfaction, infrastructure, accreditation, and assurances of quality and rigor (Kember, 1995).

Three Case Studies of Distance Education

The Problems Court explored three models of distance education being delivered by three different institutions of higher education—a large, Research I public university (Penn State), a Doctoral II state university (Old Dominion), and a private college (Saint Joseph). While the institutions are very different, with different models for delivering distance education, many of the concerns were the same as those identified in the literature. Each model is presented in this section followed by a discussion of the conclusions reached in the Problems Court.

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Penn State has created an infrastructure for distance education called the World Campus. Designated as Penn State's 25th campus in January 1998, and partially underwritten by the Sloan Foundation (and other foundations and corporations), the World Campus offers all the structural advantages of face-to-face instruction to its distance education students, including learner support (advising, registration, bursar), technical support (18 hours per day), financial aid, and access to the online university libraries. (Because Penn State is a CIC institution, students also have access to the libraries of the other "Big Ten" universities.) The WebCT system was selected as the common platform for all courses.

Courses are offered on the web to students all over the world. Students, no matter where they live, pay in-state (Pennsylvania) tuition. Faculty teach on-load; their departments are reimbursed for 25% of their salary for teaching for the World Campus. Faculty are also bought out at the same rate for course development for two semesters preceding their first course. Revenue sharing (after costs are deducted) is provided to the colleges with the expectation that the programs offering the courses will benefit. The copyright belongs to Penn State because all course development is a team effort, involving instructional design, programming, market research, communications, publicity, and client development. To support the program development, the World Campus has developed online training, including separate courses for faculty and student development.

Enrollment is growing rapidly, from serving 32 students in four programs in 1998, to over 1,000 students in 13 programs in 1999. While most of the programs offered are certificate or undergraduate programs, the first graduate degree program (M.Ed. in Adult Education) began in January 2000. The World Campus offers only programs, not isolated courses. Some courses, however, are currently being developed through a special incentive fund offered by the university; these courses will be taught both in resident instruction and through the World Campus if they complement the existing programs.

Penn State's vision is linked to the outreach mission of the land-grant university. Instruction can be offered to non-traditional students at any time and place. Distance education, ironically, is also seen as a means of reducing class size on campus while providing greater individualization and interactivity to students both·on and off campus. The courses rely heavily on the knowledge and skill of the faculty in using web-based instruction.

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program is an interactive distance education partnership with the community colleges, military installations and corporations throughout Virginia and other states. Synchronous, one-and-two-way video and audio and the Internet make it possible for students to interact with their instructors and other students. Integration of fully-streamed video enables student to receive live high-quality broadcasts at home or the office on a microcomputer. TELETECHNET offers more than 30 degree programs and had nearly 17,000 registrations in 1998–99.

The Darden College of Education offers two baccalaureate degrees and three Master of Science degrees (in Middle School Education, Occupational and Technical Studies and Special Education). Faculty are given a course release the semester before the class is offered. Teaching assistants are provided for each faculty member during instruction to aid in grading and other logistical support. In some cases, a regular faculty member and an adjunct faculty member co-teach in a given discipline. The adjunct provides needed expertise in instructional design and integration of technology. In addition, supervisors for practicum, internship, and student teaching are identified. All clinical faculty at distance sites are supervised by a designated faculty member on the home campus.

Old Dominion University has been fortunate in that the legislature funded this initiative over six years ago and an infrastructure was put in place. Distance learning has systemically changed teaching and learning both on campus and at distance sites. The majority of those changes have been positive.

A "virtual classroom" has been implemented for local centers (they now tally four). These are two way audio-two way video, and the faculty can move from site to site as all the centers have origination capabilities. Every four weeks the professor teaches live from a center. The Reading Education M.S.Ed. is a program delivered in this fashion.

The "second generation" questions to be answered are different from those asked as part of the development of courses and programs.

Examples of those questions include:

1. Have the content and pedagogy of classes offered through satellite been significantly altered?
2. How effective is the partnership of instructional design specialists and faculty with discipline-specific expertise?
3. What new methods of evaluation and assessment need to be designed?
4. What infrastructure is necessary for accreditation and assurances of quality and rigor?

If, indeed, exemplary teacher preparation can occur through distance learning, then regional, national, and international barriers can be removed. With the movement toward national teacher licensure, the faculty of Old Dominion University and the College of Education anticipate an active voice in distance learning initiatives.

Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, CT

This case study documents the experiences of one professor with one distance learning course at a small private women's college. The course came about as a result of a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued in Spring, 1998, to develop and teach an online course as part of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. She was awarded a $2,500 faculty grant to develop the course. Funds were used for technical support (registration) from the college, a scanner, a digital camera, a color printer, and a CD burner and ancillary hardware.

ENGL 340 Literature for Children is an existing undergraduate English course that has been modified for distance education. The major modifications reflect the electronic communication nature of the course. Unlike in a traditional course, communication in an online course is not restricted to a specific time and place. Therefore, communication is visual and textual. Class discussion or participation is electronically mediated. These differences have enormous implications for student learning and course design. The online nature of the course affects course design, instruction and assessment in terms of:

- The accessibility of course content.
- The diversity of course content.
- The structure of assignments.
- The nature of student participation.
- Student interaction in and outside class.
- The evaluation of student learning.
- The availability of and access to students' work.

Although the role of distance education within the Saint Joseph Community has not been defined, this course is consistent with Saint Joseph College's mission, purpose and other programs. Much like the Weekend College which was designed to meet the needs of a select population, distance education seems to be meeting the needs of some of our undergraduate students. However, the institutional commitment to distance education has yet to be made.

When asked why they were taking this course, student responses indicate that changes in the workplace, student demographics, and the economic trends are the reasons students chose to take online courses. For example, students indicated that they took this course for the following reasons: *convenience* (less conflict with work and sports schedules, less conflict with major requirements, less travel to campus and more time home with family), a search for *new learning experiences*, a desire *to improve computer skills* and a desire *to develop self discipline*.

This very informal survey and student retention in the course support the need for distance education as an alternative method of course delivery on our campus. Originally, 22 students registered for the course. Two students dropped the course due to unidentified technical difficulties within the first week of classes and two students dropped the course after midterm grades were issued. Therefore, 18 of the original students finished the course. In addition, registration for next semester shows that 25 students (the maximum allowed) have registered for the course, with three of the students being from other institutions in the consortium!

In terms of assessment and documentation of student learning, both the college and the consortium are deeply committed to maintaining the academic integrity of its academic programs. Evaluation of the course and student learning has been formative and summative. During the semester, formative evaluation included student feedback on course objectives, student self-evaluations, and student evaluation of professor effectiveness. An anonymous, final course evaluation is built into the course by the consortium as a summative evaluation. In addition, student evaluation was on-going in terms of evaluation of their work on an individual, small group, and whole class basis.

Information specific to this course is disclosed in the syllabus at the start of the course. However, it must be noted that students did not fully understand the level of their commitment in terms of amount of time required for successful participation in an online course. (This aspect of "disclosure" must be addressed.) In addition, the existing Saint Joseph College statement of academic integrity applies to this course.

In summary, the course was perceived to be a success despite the technical problems that arose during the semester. As a novice online, the instructor learned much about her strengths and weaknesses as a teacher while her students discovered much about themselves as independent learners.

Discussion

Discussion in the Problems Court focused on similarities and differences in the three models for distance education. The importance of institutional support, such as found at Penn State and Old Dominion, arose as a critical factor in successfully delivering courses and programs by distance education. The individual faculty member should not be expected to engage in distance education without a university support network. The institution also needs to recognize and compensate faculty members for the greater expenditure of time required in interacting with distance education students.

The discussion also affirmed the importance of adopting a constructivist learning philosophical base. While this approach to instruction is also appropriate for resident instruction, it is critical for distance education. Students who are geographically dispersed must be encouraged to form work groups to promote social learning. They must be encouraged to apply what they are learning to their own contexts and situations. Interactivity, on the part of the instructor with students and students with each other, is essential for learning to occur in distance education.

The discussion also focused on research questions for future exploration. For example, how much individualization, group work, and interactivity are necessary to achieve a constructivist learning environment? What factors are related to a student's success? How much time is required for an online course both on the part of the instructor and student? Is it significantly different from the time required for resident instruction?

What kinds of infrastructure and support are necessary? We envision a much greater emphasis on building partnerships among various types of institutions, such as state universities and community colleges, as Old Dominion has done, to assist in this infrastructure development. Due to the expense of offering distance education, it is possible that partnerships will develop among the offering institutions so that students can take their degree work from more than one institution. (Penn State already has one such baccalaureate degree program with the University of Iowa called the Lion-Hawk Program.) Participants concluded that distance education is here to stay—that many institutions will begin to offer distance education courses. Research is needed to help individuals and institutions design successful programs and courses in teacher literacy education.

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Reaction: Distance Learning in Literacy Instruction: What's Happening Now? What is Projected for the Next Millennium?

Susanne I. Lapp

Throughout the United States, teacher preparation programs have updated and enhanced their curricula to include informational technology so that graduates will be prepared to meet the educational needs of a diverse population of students in the twenty-first century. Economic and political indicators suggest that access to information and the ability to use that information effectively enable individuals to seize life's opportunities. Students who can access information the fastest, evaluate it the most appropriately, and use it the most efficiently to solve problems will be the ones most successful in the future (Leu, 2000). The powerful role of information technology has become pervasive in the field of education and it is essential that teacher educators find ways to prepare future educators to effectively use new information technology in their twenty-first century classrooms.

In a Problems Court discussion at the American Reading Forum, Nickie Askov, Jane Hager and Regina Chatel addressed the issue of incorporating new information technologies in their education courses and programs during a presentation entitled, "Distance Learning in Literacy Instruction: What's Happening Now? What is Projected for the Next Millennium?" The three presenters raised powerful issues regarding the incorporation of distance learning technologies in teacher preparation programs and focused their discussion on three specific areas including:

1. Commitment from the university to initiate and support distance learning projects.

2. Student and teacher incentives to participate in distance learning courses.

3. Opportunities for teacher educators to conduct research based on distance learning courses.

The intrigue of distance learning is that it is seen as an alternative to traditional methods of instructional delivery on college campuses. To create effective distance learning education programs, universities must be committed to providing considerable financial support throughout the duration of the program. According to Regina Chatel, on-line education courses are expensive to initiate and maintain. She suggested that a great deal of the financial burden could be offset through grants, but cautioned that grant writing involves a great deal of planning and resources must be allocated by the university to permit individuals to write the grants.

The presenters also suggested that universities consider the importance of maintaining effective technical assistance for on-line courses. Communication between technical assistants and course instructors must be maintained and encouraged, so that pedagogical information is effectively conveyed through on-line communication. Instructional technology must be modified to accommodate students' learning styles and instructors' teaching styles so that all students have the opportunity to gain understanding of the course content. If instructional design issues are not accounted for, instructors run the risk of jeopardizing the content of their courses and vital information may be sacrificed at the expense of technology.

Once university commitment has been established, distance learning programs must create participant incentives which lure potential students into the program and encourage faculty members to teach in distance education programs. The presenters suggested that prospective distance learning programs assess the demographics of their potential student population to determine whether on-line courses would be beneficial to students' learning.

The presenters' analysis of their student population suggested that the vast majority of the on-line students were unable to attend a university and participate in traditional classroom settings. Most of these students were women, many of whom either worked or chose to stay home and assume family responsibilities. Other students chose to participate in on-line courses because they had very long and involved sports schedules which prevented them from attending regularly scheduled university courses.

The presenters found that distance learning as an alternative to traditional method of instructional delivery on college campus encouraged many students to engage in educational dialogue from the comfort and convenience of their own homes. According to Jane Hager, "technology has helped us step out of the box." In Hager's program at Old Dominion University in Virginia, technology has come to the aid of individuals who are living in rural and isolated communities in Virginia. Through a state sponsored grant in distance learning technology, the university was able to offer teachers and other professionals certification in special education.

Nickie Askov reported on the great success of using distance learning in the master's degree program at the Pennsylvania State University. Individuals from around the world are able to come together and take on-line graduate courses where they have the unique opportunity to dialogue on issues related specifically to education, yet influenced by the participants' unique international perspectives and experiences. Askov found that the opportunity to communicate with people from around the world has been an empowering educational experience for all participants in the on-line program.

The presenters also stressed the need to attract motivated and enthusiastic instructors to teach their courses on line. Instructors must feel comfortable using technology and be willing to adjust the design of their courses to permit and encourage student learning. Instructors must consider the accessibility and diversity of their course content, the nature of student participation and interaction in and outside of class and the evaluation of students' learning.

Although all of these factors appear daunting, the presenters agreed that on-line teaching provides instructors with numerous opportunities to observe, assess and evaluate distance learning programs to determine their value and appropriateness in terms of educating individuals for the twenty-first century. The argument was raised that benchmarks of technology assessment must be designed to determine whether technology has positively or negatively affected student learning. Presenters also suggested that teacher educators conduct case study analysis on distance learning by studying how the absence of physical presence and the lack of face-to-face communication among students affect their learning. Presenters were curious to see whether it was possible for on-line students to establish relationships with other participants and thus create the sensation of an on-line community of learners who communicate from remote sites throughout the world.

It is clear from this presentation that technology will play a significant role in how students learn and instructors teach in the twenty-first century. As teacher educators we need to see informational technology as a resource which benefits all students. No longer will students be denied education simply because they are unable to conform their complex lives into the traditional format of university courses. Students who are fortunate to have access to appropriate technology will have the opportunity to receive an education which can be easily tailored to their schedules and life experiences. These individuals will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful educational exchanges with motivated individuals from around the world. According to the presenters, the challenges of the twenty-first century appear to promise students a refreshing approach to learning and an empowering educational experience.

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Tuesdays With Morrie: A Primer for Literacy Educators

Thomas Cloer, Jr.

In the last ten years, I have tried to focus on emotion and the importance of affect in the educational process. *Tuesdays With Morrie* (Albom, 1997) is about the importance of affect and affairs of the heart in educational endeavors. There are many of us in literacy education who believe that the very heart of education is education with a heart (Purkey & Novak, 1984). We realize that learning facts and knowing our discipline are important essentials, but not nearly sufficient to meet the criteria for being a successful literacy teacher.

Introduction

Mitch Albom, the author of *Tuesdays With Morrie,* like myself, is becoming long in the tooth, and is fully cognizant of that. Mr. Albom never considered that he would have to learn about dying in order to know how to live, but that's really what this book is about. It is about life and death, and coming to grips with things that matter, especially from a teacher's perspective.

The knowledge that one is dying will tend to alter our perspectives, those of us who live in a capitalistic, free-enterprise, Wal-Mart capsule. Morrie, Mitch Albom's favorite college professor, asked Mitch to do one more project with his old professor. The two could study dying together; Morrie could be research, a human textbook. Morrie asked Mitch to study him and watch what happens as one dies, and thereby learn about dying in order to know how to live. "Morrie would walk that final bridge between life and death, and narrate the trip" (Albom, 1997, p. 10).

Morrie very early taught Mitch that greetings and good-byes are very crucial. We as literacy teachers should never overlook their importance. In my fourth decade of teaching, I still consider greetings and good-byes to be some of the most critical things I do as a teacher. Morrie was a hit from the time he asked Mitchell Albom, "Do you prefer Mitch? Or is Mitchell better?" Morrie was thus sending his first invitation to Mitchell, and was confirming it with "I hope that one day you will think of me as your friend" (p. 25).

Mitch Albom reminded me of a *Saturday Night Live* skit just after Bill Clinton's tawdry sex scandal broke in 1999. In essence, what happened was Bill Clinton came clear in the impeachment trial and was not impeached. However, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich was dethroned as was David Livingston, Newt's black-belted (karate) successor, who was found to have skeletons as well. The *Saturday Night Live* actor playing David Livingston asked, "What in hell happened? Clinton sins; Newt is dethroned and I lose my chance as Speaker of the House! What in hell happened?" Mitch asked himself the same thing after Morrie stirred his mind with such ultimate questions as, "Have you found someone to share your heart with? Are you giving to your community? Are you at peace with yourself? Are you trying to be as human as you can be?" (Albom, 1997, p. 34). Mitch found himself tied to computers, modems, and cell phones. Mitch's days were full, but he was really unsatisfied. He had once sworn he would never work for money, but would join the Peace Corps. "What in hell happened?" is a question most of us ask.

Who Do You Say That I Am?

What can we do as literacy educators to transcend the centuries in a similar way that Morrie obviously did with his students? What can we do? As one who believes in the importance of affect in literacy improvement, there are some basic principles of education that correlate with Morrie's teaching. These principles have been stated explicitly in the professional literature again and again by Purkey (1970), Purkey and Novak (1984), Purkey and Schmit (1987, 1996), Purkey and Stanley (1991), and Purkey (2000). The very first principle is one that assumes that every student at every level of literacy education is asking the very same hard biblical question, "Who do ye say that I am?" Students ask me that as I get out of my car and start to my office at the university. Who do ye say that I am Dr. Cloer? Some say I'm John the Babbler, some say a liar, or one of the major problems around here. Purkey & Schmidt (1987, 1996) declare that our answers to this most critical question in Wisconsin, Oregon, and South Carolina must include invitations, formal and informal, verbal and nonverbal, intentional and respectful. These invitations must say "You're valuable, capable, and responsible. We're glad you're part of our learning community. Now, let's get with it."

I personally believe that most of literacy impairment is more a result of disinvitation than of being undisciplined or unmotivated. The least little inviting act in school is like a feast to an emotionally starved person (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Remember in the book and movie, *Forrest Gump*, children wouldn't let Forrest sit by them on the school bus because he was a simpleton (Groom, 1986). Many years after Forrest had gone to Vietnam, won the Congressional Medal of Honor, met three presidents, and became a world famous ping-pong champion and business tycoon selling Bubba Gump's shrimp, he still thought of the girl Jenny because of that first little inviting act of offering him a seat on the school bus.

All literacy students that have attended one day in any class at any of our schools are also asking like Alice in Wonderland, "Who in the world am I?" In *Forrest Gump*, when Jenny remembered the incestuous sexual abuse and threw rocks at the house where it happened, Forrest replied "Sometimes there just ain't enough rocks." Forrest was right. The reason Jenny lived like she lived, did what she did, and died like she died, was because of the way she had been made to feel unloved, incapable, and irresponsible. Morrie knew what really mattered; emotions matter.

To arrive at literacy empowerment instead of literacy impairment, students need invitations the way South Carolina blooms need the cool spring rains. When our students in literacy education are invited, they start joining in the progress of civilization in the elementary schools, they start realizing their human potential in the reading groups, and they start celebrating their existence as part of the human race (Purkey & Novak, 1984). Literacy students need invitations the way the old red mountain buckeye trees need the rich, black mountain soil around my home.

Empowerment – More Than Knowledge

Who are the people working in literacy that will have the most impact on students?

Purkey and Novak (1984) believe that having knowledge and imparting knowledge is not enough as a teacher. The guys involved in Watergate were all lawyers! These lawyers knew more about the law than anyone in America. It is true, as Whitehead (1967) warns, that fools generalize before becoming precise with much knowledge. We need to know more about everything. Whitehead says that education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge. Just knowing a great deal isn't enough. We should produce students who possess culture, activity of thought, receptiveness to beauty and humane feelings. Scraps of information, he complains, have nothing to do with culture. A merely well-informed man is the biggest bore on God's earth (Whitehead, 1967).

Simply being well informed as a literacy educator is really not enough. If knowledge were enough, none of those lawyers in Watergate would have broken the law. Physicians would be the healthiest people in America. Psychiatrists would be the best adjusted, and evangelists would be the most compassionate, kind, and humble people in our society. We literacy educators that stress the affective domain certainly believe in the art of the utilization of knowledge. But we declare, as Morrie would, that the excellence in education movement must involve something more than abstinence, fasting, celibacy, exhaustion, and high test scores. I know I personally can live for days on a single invitation. Invitations are as nourishing to me as my senior citizen Silver B-Complex vitamins. Morrie was so right when talking about the back and forth of life, and it being like a wrestling match. "Love wins. Love always wins" (Albom, p. 40).

Most Important: How to Give Love

Morrie's most important principle for life and the classroom concerned how we interact, and how explicit and intentional we are with our interactions. "The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and let it come in" (Albom, 1997, p. 52).

Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the Native American and U.S. Senator from Colorado was an idol of mine when I was in undergraduate school in the early 60's. He was a champion in judo. I read his biography recently, *An American Warrior* (Viola, 1993), and I was reminded how all that Olympic talent in judo and political acumen for Washington was overlooked by all his teachers. I was especially intrigued by the notes in his school folder: "Makes no effort. Is conveniently absent when assignments are due. Poor in work habits and class attitude. Dreamy. Ben always has an excuse written out to get out of taking gym" (Viola, 1993, p. 29). This is the famous athlete, Olympian, judo champion, senator from Colorado. No one knew how to give him love at school. No one saw any potential in Ben Nighthorse Campbell; no one even noticed his physical prowess.

Morrie saw things in people that others overlooked. For example, Mitch said, "He told me I was good enough to write an honors project—something I had never considered" (p. 133). Morrie knew that students need to have their potential pointed out to them regularly, explicitly, and intentionally (Purkey, 2000).

Inviting actions speak more clearly than mere inviting words. To really love is to act lovingly; to really care is to act caringly. It has to be regular, explicit, and intentional (Purkey, 2000). It would be silly for me, for example, to say to my wife of 35 years, "Elaine, why are you always wanting me to show that I care? I told you and even showed you that I cared when we were majoring in theater (drive-in theater at the edge of Williamsburg, Kentucky) in college in 1965." That wouldn't get it with Elaine. I have to act caringly, and do it regularly and intentionally.

People tell me, "Cloer, don't you know people will take advantage of you. Keep your guard up! You must counterpunch!" The people who tell me that don't understand. Many of them have even offered an invitation and had it turned down by a student. They don't understand that a student's declining of an invitation by a teacher is a way of testing its sincerity (Purkey & Schmidt, 1987). Don't quit sending invitations because one is declined. Invitations are to teacher-student relationships in literacy as black mountain soil is to towering Appalachian hemlocks. I've been studying invitations and the effects of such in schooling for 49 years (I started in the mountains when I was six.). It has been my finding that some educators really like students more in the abstract than in the concrete.

I recently read the biography titled *Mankiller* (Mankiller & Wallis, 1993), a book about the female Cherokee Chief, Wilma Mankiller, and how she was relocated as a child by the U.S. government to the inner city of San Francisco. In her book she tells how that every single person in school laughed at her name. She and her sister sat up at nights practicing talking so as to lose their accents and sound like the other kids. She writes that she spent most of her time trying to be as inconspicuous as possible in high school. She was never much of a scholar and doesn't have many memories from her years in high school. None of her teachers left enough impact for her even to remember their names. My good colleagues, the unwillingness to invite is just as lethal as the willingness to disinvite. Mankiller's teachers and Ben Nighthorse Campbell's teachers didn't put into practice what Morrie declared to be the most important principle. "The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in" (Albom, 1997, p. 52).

Inviting Forth Excellence

A colleague and I recently conducted and published the results of a large scale study involving high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools (Cloer & Alexander, 1991). We hypothesized that we could predict teacher effectiveness by simply having teachers react anonymously to ideological statements about students, teaching, and the enterprise of education. We then divided the teachers into inviters and disinviters. We found in that important study that teachers who were inviting and did not store their toxic waste in students, did not launch SCUDS at students, were judged statistically significantly more effective, and brought about more excellence in education than was achieved by the disinviting psychological terrorists. The terrorists, as a group, were rated ineffective on seven different performance dimensions by a professional evaluator or rater who had no idea as to how these people responded to the statements.

Conclusion

As I get longer in the tooth, I realize more clearly whatever is done in teaching is done forever. Affirmations, confirmations and validations of students last forever. As Purkey (2000) says, all the devils in hell can't erase a single dot of an "i" in an invitation that is sent from caring, knowledgeable literacy educators, because whatever has been done is done forever.

I was watching the movie *Schindler's List* recently. Spielberg's assistant director is my wife's first cousin, and he spends a good deal of time at our mountain home trying to get me to reveal where I fish in the Appalachians for native trout. We watch his films, and that film *Schindler's List* affected me. Oskar Schindler saved 2100 people from a horrible early death. He was pronounced a righteous man and had a tree planted in his honor—but there is much more than that. One could see at the end of that disturbing movie many of the Jewish people that were alive many years later only because of Oskar Schindler, and they each placed a small stone on Schindler's grave because what Schindler did, he had done forever. He had taken on immortality through their lives! Morrie answered Mitch's question well about whether or not Morrie worried about being forgotten after death. He said, "I don't think I will be. I've got so many people who have been involved with me in close, intimate ways. And love is how you stay alive, even after you are gone" (p. 133). If literacy educators want to gain immortality, if literacy educators want to live on even in a time they won't get to see, then they should affect some student's spirit in a positive way. Exploring the art of student empowerment is really a worthwhile endeavor.

I will never forget in the movie, *Dances With Wolves*, what Kicking Bird said to Lieutenant John Dunbar. He said, "Of all the trails we take in life, one matters most, and that is the trail of a true human being." We must look for that trail, get on that path, and stay on it because of the promises we must keep. Our contracts must read that through our teaching lives we will invite, we will love, we will empower. These are promises we all must keep before we sleep.

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A Comparison Between the History of Writing and Children's Transition into Conventional Writing: Parallels and Divergences

June E. Barnhart

Over the past two decades, results from emergent literacy research have shown that children have literacy knowledge that is correct by conventional standards. Furthermore, descriptions of young children show that they have literacy knowledge that is emerging toward conventional standards along a logical path based on features of written language, both in its graphic form and in its function (Barnhart, 1988; Chomsky, 1970; Clay, 1975; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Sulzby, 1985).

These descriptions now suggest that children explore various hypotheses before understanding that the writing surrounding them is alphabetic in nature. The writing of children which precedes the discovery of the alphabetic principle, however, is far from unstructured. Rather, children's early writing behaviors provide evidence of their efforts in their search for an understanding of the rules of our alphabetic writing system.

From this descriptive research, two questions relating to the transition process from emergent to conventional writing warrant further attention: (a) how can we characterize children's development into conventional writing, and (b) why does writing in young children develop toward a conventional adult model?

In an effort to explore these two questions, the present paper drew from the knowledge base that describes two levels of orthographic development. First, drawing on the historical work by Gelb (1963), the evolutionary development of writing across time for humanity was examined in order to grasp some notion of what there is to be discovered about written language at a global level. Second, a focused consideration of current research that offers empirical descriptions of writing development in young children was considered (Barnhart, 1988; Dyson, 1985; Richgels, 1995; Sulzby, 1985; Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The discussion then searched for parallels and divergences that can be discerned between these two levels of orthographic development that may hold promising and insightful implications for researchers and teachers who study and instruct young children. Finally, this paper attempted to explain parallels in broad transitional patterns of change between the two phenomena by suggesting a common mechanism of change at the global level.

The Evolution of Writing

In his book, *A Study of Writing,* Gelb (1963) traces the history of writing from its earliest stage of expressing meaning via loose connections with speech, to the later stage of writing as an expression of meaning via a linguistic speech form. While a detailed and comprehensive account of this history can be secured from Gelb (1963), the discussion which follows presents only a brief sketch of the salient relationships and patterns relevant to the discussion at hand. The writing systems to be highlighted here include: (a) pictographic writing, (b) ideographic writing, (c) syllabic writing, and (d) alphabetic writing.

Pictographic Writing

According to Gelb (1963), man first attempted to convey his thoughts and feelings via pictures in order to convey intended meaning. Thus, visible, drawn forms expressed meaning directly without an intervening linguistic form. One such device was pictographic writing. Fazzioli (1986) defines pictographic writing as a direct iconic representation such as the sun, the moon, or a tree. Pictographs embody an extremely simple and primitive notion about how to communicate by means of visual symbols.

Ideographic Writing

A second device described by Gelb (1963) is ideographic writing. A simple ideograph is an abstract symbol that represents ideas not spoken words (simply, "idea writing"), such as three horizontal lines to represent the number 3 or an arrow to signal the directions up or down (Fazzioli, 1986). Road signs convey messages to motorists (e.g., the idea that a winding road is up ahead, they will be driving on a 2-way highway, etc.) in the form of simple ideographs. Other examples used in our writing system today include number symbols (1, 2, 3, etc.), mathematical operation signs (+, =, etc.), and others ($, &, #, etc.).

Chinese writing is a modern system based on the principle of using a single symbol to represent an idea. In ancient times the symbols were pictures of things they represented. Through constant use, the symbols came to look less like pictures, and the meanings became abstracted from the original concrete things that the symbols represented.

The widely used systems of pictographic and ideographic writing are perhaps best represented by the American Indians. This stage in the history of writing is called "descriptive" or "representational" by Gelb (1963), since these pictures served to communicate ideas by means of pictures, each of which separately or by their sum total, suggested the intended meaning.

Syllabic Writing

According to Gelb (1963), it was the invention of the phonetic principle (the principle that relates symbols with words on the basis of sound) that was instrumental in opening new horizons in the history of writing. With the introduction of phonetization, a new device was created by means of phonetic transfer. This system of writing can be illustrated by the rebus system. When a graphic sign no longer has any visual relationship to the word it represents it becomes a symbol for the sounds which represent the word. A single sign can then be used to represent all words with the same sound (i.e., the homophones of the language).

Alphabetic Writing

But even in a language with a "simple" and regular structure the number of syllables which would have to be used is enormous. The use of the alphabet, as we know it, was a Greek invention that occurred approximately 5,000 years ago. Instead of representing a whole syllable (a vowel plus a consonant), the new Greek symbols would represent either a consonant or a vowel, but not both. Thus, according to Gelb (1963), the alphabet and the alphabetic principle were invented as maximally efficient systems for transcribing human language. The 26 letters of our alphabet can, in some combination, represent all of the sounds contained in all 130,000+ words in a large English dictionary.

Four major types of writing systems have been briefly described as: (a) the pictographic system, which uses pictures to directly represent meaning; (b) the ideographic system, which uses symbols to represent whole words or ideas; (c) the syllabic system, which uses symbols to represent syllables; and (d) the alphabetic system, which uses symbols to represent individual speech sounds or "phonemes."

The history of writing shows that the concept of alphabetization took humanity a great deal of time to establish. From our reconstruction of the various phases of writing through history, it appears that we can characterize the process as unidirectional. In other words, there has been systematic change in one overall direction. Over historical time, there has been a gradual increase in the use and awareness of increasingly more abstract linguistic levels and categories.

Our brief review of the history of writing further suggests that writing systems evolved via a process of hierarchical developmental sequence (Flavell, 1977). In this type of pattern, simpler constituents develop earlier, and the more complex structures develop later. In tracing the history of writing, the evolution of writing moved in steps from a point where meaning was transcribed directly via pictures toward the transcription of meaning by sound.

In fact, Gelb (1963) argues that in reaching its ultimate development, any system of writing (whatever its forerunners may be) *must* pass through stages in the following order: ideographic, syllabic, and alphabetic. A system of writing can naturally stop at one stage without evolving further, and some writing systems have. However, according to Gelb (1963) if the evolutionary process is to continue, no stage of development can be skipped.

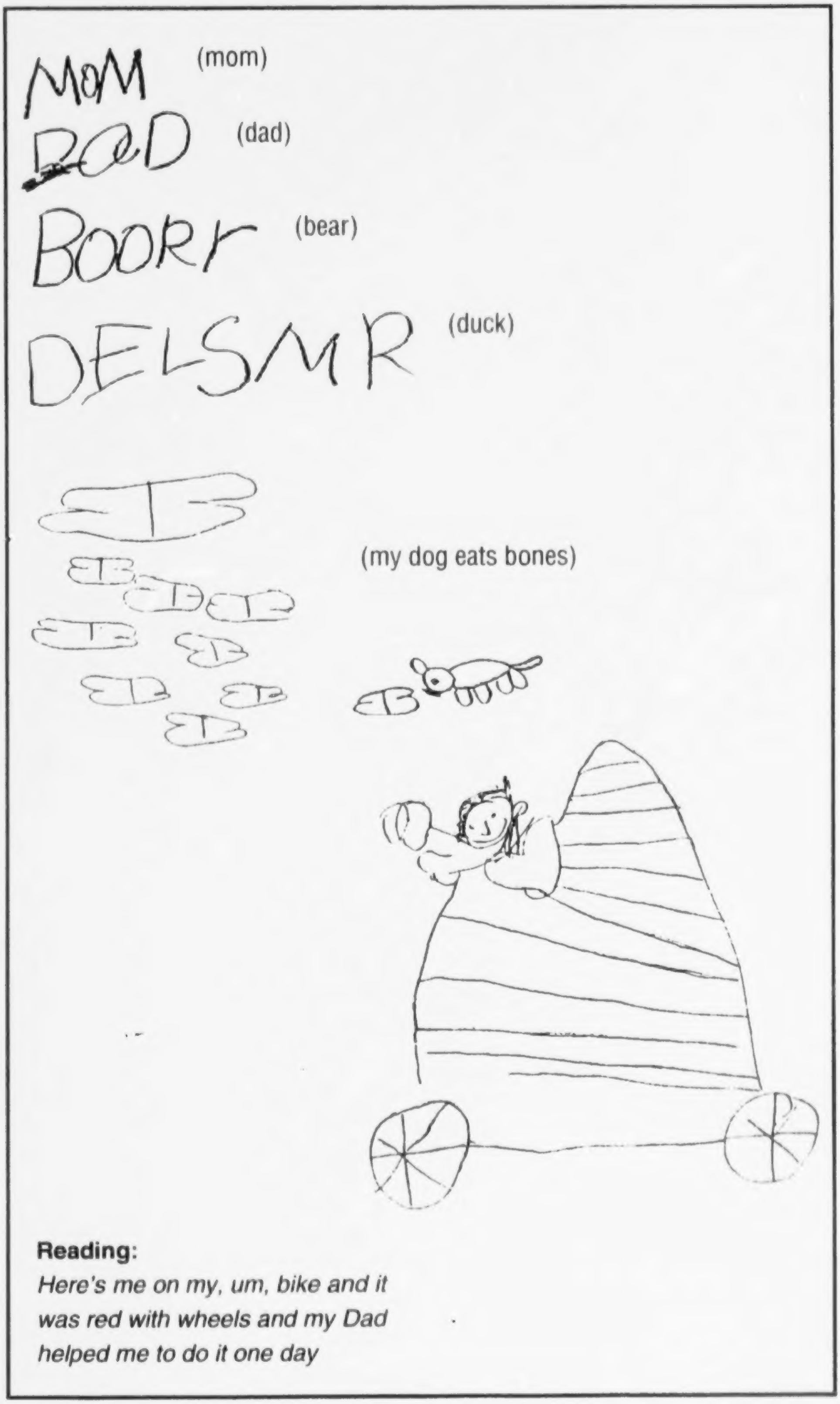
Writing Development in Young Children

From this overview of the history of writing and a discussion of the nature of the change process, let's now look at writing development on a different level—writing development in young children. First we ask, "How can we characterize their progress through various hypotheses about written language until they develop an understanding and use of alphabetic writing?"

Over the past two decades research results have reported that children who are not yet writing and reading conventionally, nevertheless, exhibit knowledge of features of the written language system of their culture. For example, when kindergartners were asked, "What can you write?" Sulzby (1985) reports that they most often used conventional spelling and conventional letters; however, when asked to write a story, these 5-year-olds used a range of writing forms including drawing, scribbling, letter strings, and some conventional spelling.

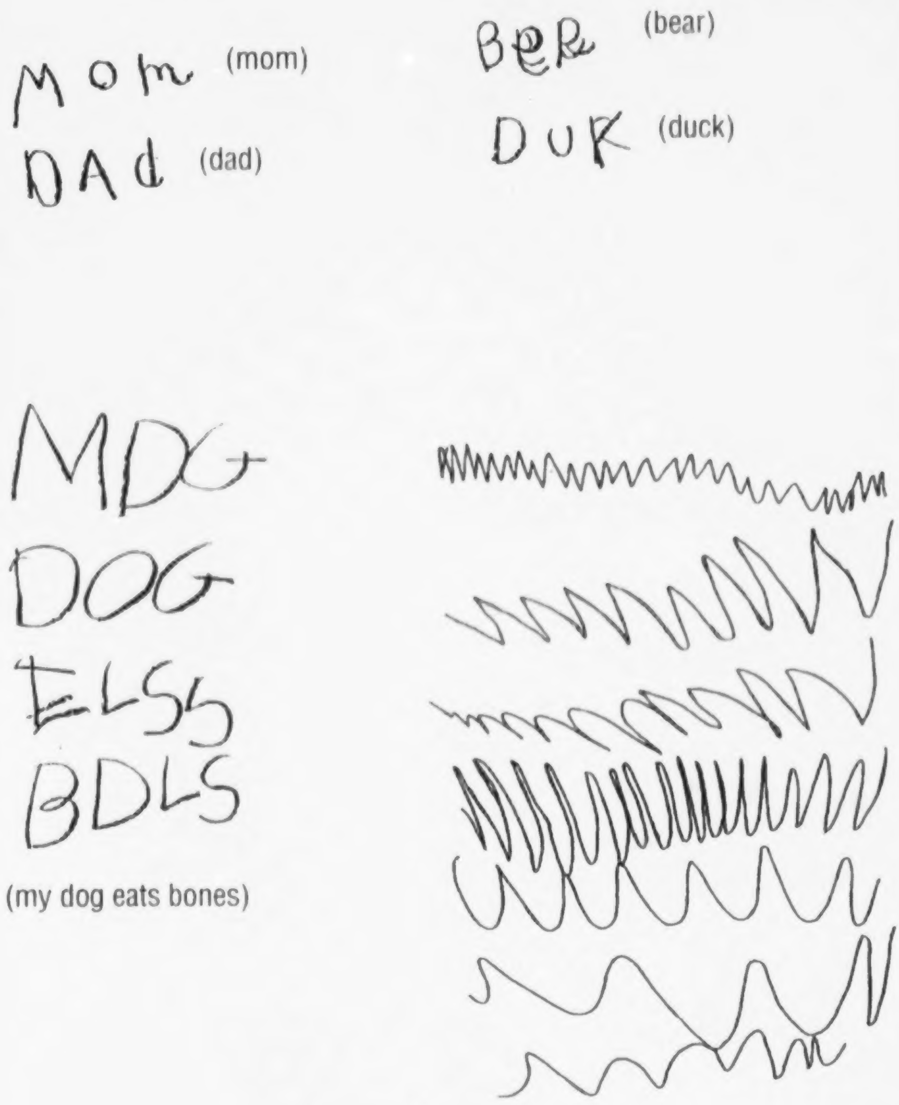
More recent research (Barnhart, 1986, 1988) confirms these findings. When kindergarten children were asked to write isolated, familiar words they often used conventional and invented spelling. Yet, when these same children were asked to write a sentence, they used more variety in writing forms. Further, when asked to write a story, even more variety in writing forms was reported. More specifically, when asked to write a sentence, some chose to draw; others used letter strings, invented spelling, or conventional spelling. When asked to write a story, some children chose to draw their story, while others used scribbling or curved letterlike forms. Others used strings of letters or name-elements to stand for their stories. Still others used invented spelling systems varying from one letter to stand for one syllable to full invented spelling. A few used some conventional spelling. Importantly, when asked to write a story many children used a combination of various writing systems.

Along these lines, Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 provide photocopy reductions of writing samples from kindergarten children that were produced in September of the school year. All children were asked to write the following items: MOM, DAD, BEAR, DUCK, MY DOG EATS BONES, and to write a story about how they learned to ride a bicycle or big wheel. After each item was written, they were asked to read what they had written, and the readings of their productions are included in parentheses.


MoM (mom)
BaD (dad)
BOORr (bear)
DELSMR (duck)
(my dog eats bones)

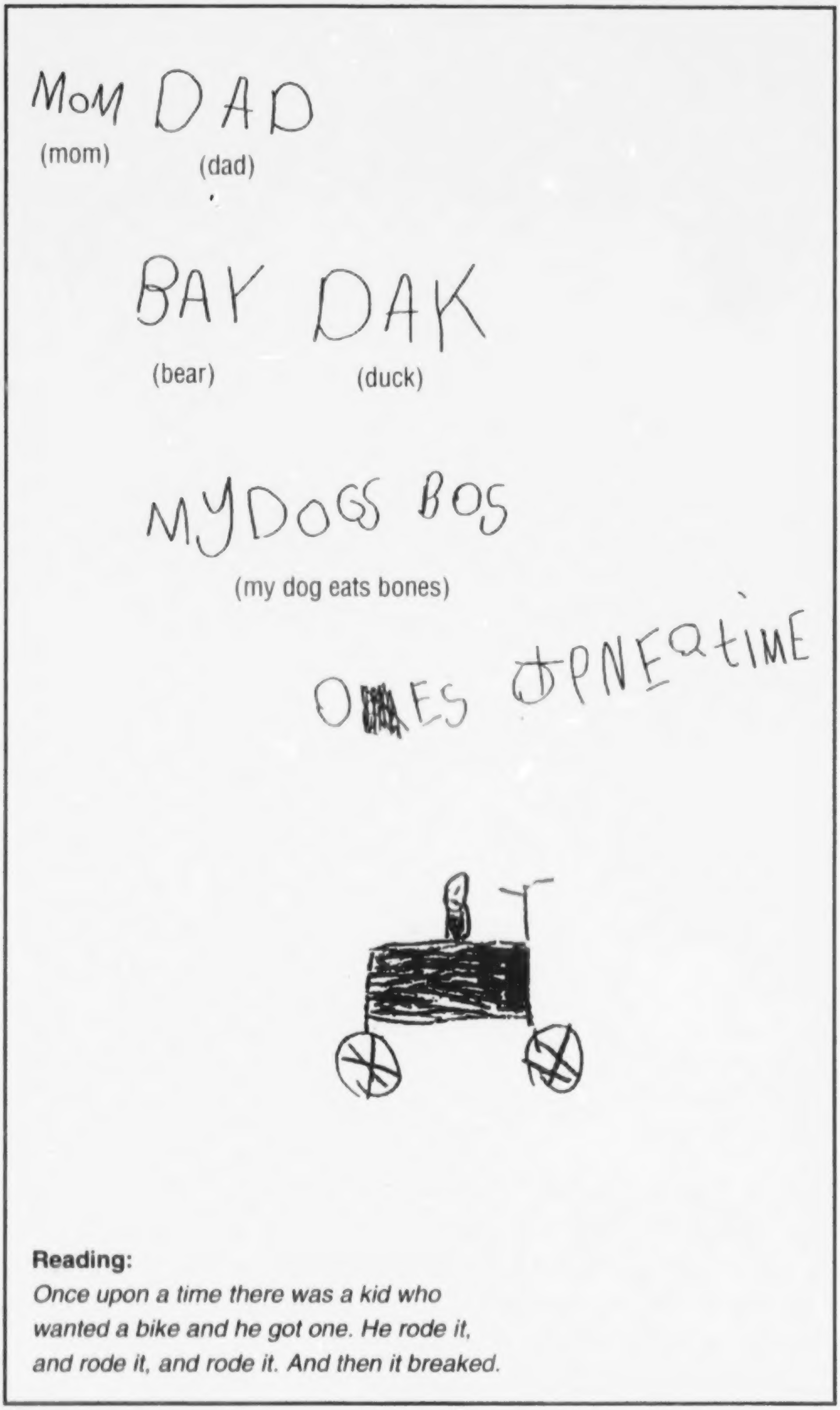
Reading:
Here's me on my, um, bike and it was red with wheels and my Dad helped me to do it one day

Figure 1


MOm (mom)
DAd (dad)
BeR (bear)
DUK (duck)
MDG
DOG
ELSS
BDLS
(my dog eats bones)

Reading:
Once upon a time there was a little girl. She was 4 years old. She had a dog and a bike. She was playing with it. While she was playing she went inside. Her Mom came out and she got on the bike. The bird said tweet-tweet-tweet.

Figure 2



MOM DAD

(mom) (dad)

BAY DAK

(bear) (duck)

MYDOGS BOS

(my dog eats bones)

O[illegible]ES OPNEatIME

Reading:

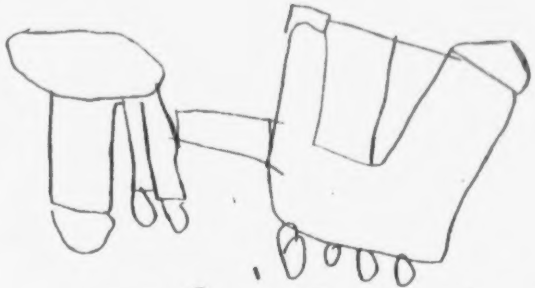
Once upon a time there was a kid who wanted a bike and he got one. He rode it, and rode it, and rode it. And then it breaked.

Figure 3

DA
MI FAT BT (my dog eats bones)
DARK
(duck)

MOM (mom)

BAR (bear)
DAD
(dad)



E o e c c S L M U ı F T
G 9 Q W e L G U V

Reading:
Once GI Joe was at the bad guys command center. The bad guys went inside and there was a bike that he wanted to ride, and the bad guys sat on it, and so I got another bike to ride. That's all.

Figure 4

The representative examples presented in these four figures illustrate the variety in writing systems between and within children that has been described consistently by researchers in emergent literacy (e.g., Barnhart, 1988, 1991; Dyson, 1985; Sulzby, Barnhart & Hieshima, 1989).

Thus, researchers to date report that children use a wide range of writing forms that fluctuate as the items vary in phonetic complexity, abstractness, and task demands (Barnhart, 1988). However, rather than a strict developmental sequence, Sulzby (1985) proposes that these writing systems are part of a many-featured repertoire, and children may fall back on lower-level knowledge in order to accomplish a higher-order goal.

Similar to the evolution of writing across time, research shows that young children's gradual transition toward conventional, alphabetic writing appears to also be unidirectional—from less to more alphabetization. Slowly, from infancy onward, children develop knowledge about writing and reading, and gradually these various notions form patterns that become more and more integrated and organized. However, instead of learning about written language in a serial manner, research suggests that young children uncover multiple features of written language concurrently.

In contrast to the history of writing, empirical evidence suggests that the transition process in children's written language development may follow a pattern of developmental synchrony. In other words, if the development of performance A and B does not form a consistent sequence in a sample, the synchronous development of two or more performance capabilities may emerge together during some interval of time. The development of writing behaviors does not form a consistent sequence across all children with research suggesting instead that there may be the synchronous development of two or more written language behaviors which are unordered. Sulzby (1992) concludes that children write with many forms before developing a concept close to conventional writing, moving back and forth across these forms, and numerous studies likewise document the apparent ambivalence children show about writing forms (Barnhart, 1986, 1988; Sulzby, 1983, 1985; Sulzby, Barnhart & Hieshima, 1989).

While research suggests that literacy development in young children does not proceed via one series of hierarchical levels or stages, neither does the evidence suggest that development proceeds idiosyncratically. Rather, evidence suggests that literacy development may follow a complicated pattern even though overall, children do progress toward conventional, alphabetic writing (Sulzby, 1985).

So, when we look at the specific pattern of change, there is a divergence between the history of writing and the development of writing in young children. However, if we now focus on the *similarities* between the history of writing and writing development in young children, we can ask our second question: "Before formal instruction in school, why does writing in young children develop toward a conventional, alphabetic model?" It appears that both phenomena systematically change in a unidirectional manner, suggesting a shared source of overall change (i.e., a common underlying mechanism of change).

Parallels in Underlying Mechanism of Change

Perhaps it can be suggested that with regard to the history of writing, writing passed from one stage to another because at a certain time a new system was deemed better suited to local needs than the one currently in use. In other words, improvement and adaptation to conditions were the aims of the evolution of writing as it progressed across time, developing in the direction of a more suitable and efficient means of human communication.

According to Gelb (1963), writing began at the time when humans learned to communicate their thoughts and feelings by visible signs that were understandable, initially, only to the individual creating the marks. In the beginning, pictures served as a visual expression of an individual's ideas in a form that was, to a great extent, independent of speech. Thus, the relationship between writing and speech in the early stages of the evolution of writing was very loose, in as much as the written message did not correspond to exact forms of speech. In other words, a given message could be read (i.e., put into words) in many different ways. In later periods, systematic application of "phonetization" enabled individuals to express their ideas in a form which would correspond to exact categories of speech.

But, is there any inherent reason why children who speak English should expect writing to eventually work by the alphabetic principle? Discovering how to write conventionally in English involves making choices from a very large range of alternatives. So, if children from certain cultures finally arrive at an alphabetic understanding to the exclusion of other hypotheses it might be suggested that they may do so because any other hypotheses enter into unsolvable conflicts with information provided by the writing system which they experience in their environment. Along these lines, Scribner and Cole (1981) view literacy as a cultural practice. Thus, when children become literate they use writing and reading in the performance of the practices which constitute their culture.

For many children then, the discovery that written language can be transformed into speech and speech into written language is not at all accidental (Heath, 1982; Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Parents in many cultural groups engage their children in school-oriented book-reading, picture-labeling games, and telling and reading bedtime stories. The modeling of parents and older siblings may provide the impetus for children to experiment with writing as they become interested in the functions and uses of the writing system of their culture. Gundlach (1982) suggests that children begin to write because they have come to value written language through interactions with parents, siblings, and literate others around them, and to use written language for the purposes already important to them when they talk, draw, and play. Thus, children write to name and organize parts of their worlds, to capture their experiences, to tell stories, to fulfill family and school responsibilities, to communicate messages to readers, to make lists to help them remember, and so forth. On this journey, children draw on different models in developing an understanding of the uses and forms of writing. In other words, they take different routes to the same destination. Similar to the history of writing, the young child's writing evolves from serving as a personal and private system for recording his or her ideas, feelings, and speech to the conventional model, as writing comes to be viewed as a means of human communication that requires a socially- and culturally-shared symbol system.

Thus, with regard to both the history of writing and writing development in young children, socially interactive events may be the inducer, playing an essential role in both triggering and shaping the evolution of writing at both levels.

This suggests a mechanism-related parallel between the history of writing and writing development in young children. It is proposed here that the basis for this dynamic process at both levels lies in the sociocultural influences that surround language, and applies regardless of whether we are considering it from the perspective of changes in writing systems across history or changes in writing systems across the child's lifetime.

Conclusion

Results of the present comparison between two levels of orthographic development (i.e., the history of writing and children's transition into conventional writing), lead us to suggest the following:

1. There are *divergences* in developmental patterns of data

between the two levels of orthographic development when comparisons are made at a focused level. More specifically, the history of writing appears to follow a pattern of hierarchical inclusion, while the process of transition to conventional writing in children may instead follow a pattern of developmental synchrony. The order in which knowledge and discovery occur in the child as well as just what knowledge becomes understood during this transition toward the conventional, alphabetic model, does not appear to follow a strict one-to-one recapitulation model.

2. There are also *parallels* in developmental patterns between both phenomena at the global level, as both follow a unidirectional line (i.e., from less to more abstractness of linguistic categories), proceeding gradually through a series of continuous transitions toward an adoption, understanding, and usage of the alphabetic principle.

3. An explanation for the parallels at this global level may lie in the overall social, cultural, and functional nature of literacy.

The results of this examination of the transitional process in writing systems at the historical and individual levels suggest that in order to understand the obstacles to be overcome as children transition from emergent writing to conventional writing, we must consider the similarities at both levels. In this regard, if we are to understand and foster children's transition toward conventional writing, the present discussion underscores the importance/salience of not only the linguistic, but the social, cultural, and functional contexts in which both processes occur as well.

Issues related to instructional efforts of teachers to foster young children's transition toward conventional, alphabetic writing arise from this present discussion. According to several researchers (Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1985; Graves, 1983), it appears that children may learn to write at least as much by discovering and experimenting as by being formally taught. With repeated practice in writing, they produce graphic marks that more closely approximate the writing seen in the print world around them. Social interaction with adults along with opportunities for independent experiments with written language are critical for early literacy development (Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Teale, 1986). Our challenge is to find developmentally appropriate and meaningful ways to continue children's literacy growth when they enter school. Holdaway (1979) proposes that children's early attempts at writing are closely connected with their interest in environmental print, with both presenting a mystery that is well worth solving. They begin to play with writing in a way that is similar to the way they play with reading, producing writing-like scribble that carries a message. They learn to write their names, and explore creating letters and letter-like symbols with a variety of writing devices. This playlike writing provides opportunities for children to learn about the form and functions of print. Graves (1983) suggests that teachers can build on this early knowledge of writing by encouraging and valuing children's efforts to communicate with personal marks on paper. Functional opportunities for children to use writing for a variety of real-life purposes also serve to promote young children's writing development. Through opportunities to use reading and writing for practical purposes and playful exploration of print, teachers play an important role in fostering young children's understanding about the functions, form, and conventions of written language.

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Linking Schools, Families, and Communities: A Family Literacy Project

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The Importance of Family Literacy

Falling test scores for children in grades K-12 coupled with rising literacy requirements in the workplace have prompted educators to search for the best methods to impact literacy development. In the quest to improve literacy achievement, school districts have considered intervention plans, instructional programs, and materials for teaching reading and writing in grades K-12. Yet, literacy is not the sole responsibility of the school but rather a shared responsibility of the school, community, and the family (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990; Rasinski, 1995). A study by Marjoribanks in 1972 attributed more than half the variance in children's IQ scores to the learning environment in the home. Indeed, the positive impact of family involvement in a child's literacy development has been well documented with gains in the following areas:

- Overall school achievement including reading achievement, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, math and science (Anderson, 1994; Benjamin, 1993; Ostlund, Gennaro, Dobbert, 1985).

- Regular school attendance (Mansback, 1993; Nurss, Mosenthal, Hinchman, 1992).

- School completion rates (Mansback, 1993).
- Oral language development (Chall & Snow, 1982).
- Decoding ability (Greer & Mason, 1988; Mundre & McCormick, 1989).
- Children's self esteem and health (Nurss, Mosenthal, Hinchman, 1992).

According to Postlethwaite and Ross (1992), family involvement may be the most critical factor in children's literacy achievement. However, many parents are not aware of their potential impact or the methods they can utilize to foster their children's literacy development. In fact, often there is a wide gap between the expectations and practices of the school and those of the home regarding the fostering of children's emerging literacy. In order to positively impact children's language acquisition and literacy skills, schools should examine avenues for collaboration with families and local communities to support and encourage children as they learn to read and read to learn. Linking homes, local communities, and schools in networks of literacy that value and reflect cultural and linguistic diversity has positive, far reaching outcomes for all concerned. Working from this framework, this article will discuss how four university professors partnered with a local school district to develop a training model focused on family literacy.

A Family Literacy Project

Four university professors contacted a local district, the Dallas Public Schools, to explore possibilities for investigating questions about how can schools and teachers assist parents in fostering their children's literacy development, and about what types of family literacy efforts might prove most useful. In recent years, Dallas' schools have faced problems typical of urban and inner city districts across the nation (e.g., lagging public support, ethnically diverse populations, and high numbers of low income and at risk students). Most recently children's lack of achievement in reading prompted the creation of the Dallas Reading Plan, an innovative program of teacher training aimed at children's literacy development. Additionally, recognizing the importance of home and community-based activities focusing on language/literacy development, the Dallas Reading Plan encouraged schools to implement and actively promote outreach programs and support systems fostering parent participation and involvement.

Forming a Collaborative Effort to Foster Family Literacy: Outlining the Project

Beginning in August 1998, the university professors met with the Director of the Dallas Reading Plan to discuss opportunities for a collaborative effort highlighting family literacy. The dialogue centered around a consideration of district needs and ways those needs might be met. A draft proposal emerged from this initial brainstorming session with the university professors agreeing to act as coaches, developing and piloting a model for using study groups to encourage the exploration of best practices for establishing community-based programs and activities promoting family literacy. These study groups, established on local campuses, would help to facilitate informed decision making regarding implementation of campus-based family literacy activities supporting the district's reading initiative (i.e., having all Dallas Public School students reading at grade level in the language of instruction by the end of third grade).

The next step was to select partner schools for the collaborative effort. Campuses invited to participate in this pilot program were elementary schools serving kindergarten through 3rd grade students. Each campus was chosen by the Dallas Reading Department and the superintendents of the nine administrative subdivisions of the Dallas Public Schools. One campus from each of the nine subdivisions was selected to participate over the next year.

The Project Design

Further review of project goals and additional feedback to shape our collaborative effort emerged from a preliminary meeting with principals from the selected schools and other key staff from support services within the district (Dallas Reading Plan, Early Childhood Education, Community Relations, Multilingual Education, Adult Basic Education, and Even Start). Incorporating all the input from district personnel, the final proposal for the Family Literacy Project had as its goal to focus attention on family literacy through a family, school, and community effort. To accomplish this goal, the members of the family literacy project participated in the following activities during the 1998-1999 school year (See Appendix for an outline of the year's activities):

- A series of sharing and training study group sessions to investigate and discuss research-based "best practices" for promoting family literacy.

- Development of an instrument to determine current levels of parent involvement in literacy in the home and to identify literacy efforts of local schools and community support organizations.

- Development of customized pilot models for parent involvement to be implemented at the home campus during the spring of 1999.

With an overview of the project in hand, principals returned to their home campuses to select participants for this year-long venture. Each participating campus sent a minimum of three representatives who volunteered: one K-3 teacher, one parent from the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and one parent currently serving on the School-Community Council (SCC). Campus principals were encouraged to attend as well. All meetings were scheduled on Thursday evenings after school from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. By this point, the planning and feedback phase had taken three months, an important consideration for those interested in entering into collaborative partnerships.

Building Background on Family Literacy

Beginning in November, study groups made up of administrators, teachers, and parent leaders from nine elementary schools began meeting with university coaches and selected lead reading teachers to investigate and discuss research-based "best practices" for promoting family literacy. A typical schedule for each meeting looked like this:

- "Warm up" activities for getting acquainted and setting the tone.

- Poetry sharing with examples linked to school and family experiences.

- Small group "circuit" presentations of family literacy research/information.

- Discussion of school based family literacy projects.

The agenda for the first meeting included an orientation to the goals of the project and a presentation of the configuration of the Family Literacy Project. The first three meetings, during the fall and winter, were devoted to building a background on family literacy initiatives. To accomplish this goal in a hands-on format allowing for discussion and avoiding a lecture format, the four university coaches adopted a circuit presentation technique to share information. The 40 participants were divided into four smaller groups for the information sharing, and each university coach summarized information for a 15-minute participatory question/answer session with one of the small groups. Then, the coaches rotated to another group until all four groups had been addressed. Realizing that after a long day at work teachers and parent volunteers would not be interested in a barrage of educational jargon and statistics, the emphasis of all presentations was on actively involving the participants, not lecturing to them. Feedback and ideas from participants were encouraged resulting in a rich conversation and idea sharing with personal examples from all present.

The information shared in the circuit presentations varied with input drawn from brochures and books on family literacy as well as research articles reflecting issues surrounding implementation of family literacy efforts. For instance, one evening one of the researchers chose to discuss a chapter in Robin Scarcella's (1990) book, *Teaching Language Minority Students in the Multicultural Classroom*. The chapter offered valuable insights about the many obstacles to parental involvement in the school such as parents' lack of proficiency in English and the lack of bilingual personnel in schools. To encourage parental involvement in the schools and to foster literacy activities at home, the chapter suggested having parent volunteers share bilingual books in classrooms or creating opportunities for family communication with homework activities such as making a personal timeline of the child's life.

Throughout the background building process, the university coaches compiled a notebook of the research and information shared as well as other helpful ideas addressing family literacy including: abstracts of journal articles; journal and informational articles highlighting family literacy in the home, school, and community; and bibliographies of research sources, professional resources (videos, volunteer tutor handbooks, etc.) and children's literature and poetry addressing families and family literacy. To spur information sharing and dissemination, copies of this notebook were given to each of the participating campuses as a resource handbook for their future efforts.

Modeling Family Literacy Ideas and Activities

With a focus on involvement, warm up activities were conducted at each meeting as a means of involving participants and modeling techniques for family literacy at home and in the classroom. A rich variety of activities motivated the participants to reflect and discuss and contributed to the relaxed tone of each meeting. A brief summary of these techniques follows.

- The first night we began the meeting with a writing prompt asking group members to reflect on their own early literacy experiences. Many heartwarming and funny examples emerged including a principal who shared how her early literacy was shaped by growing up with a mother who was deaf.

- To help the group meet and to build a sense of community, we created a Get Acquainted Bingo icebreaker. Using a Bingo card with spaces devoted to family literacy activities (e.g., likes to tell stories, remembers being read to as a child, likes to tell jokes, remembers learning songs at home, etc.), group members circulated and located someone who could sign off on a space. Our Bingo activity was followed by a discussion of the many diverse ways that literacy instruction occurs at home (songs, storytelling, etc.).

- To demonstrate how school and home could be linked through school activities, we shared a thematic unit on families. Numerous picture books highlighting the family theme were distributed as examples to encourage parents to foster children's literacy development through reading high quality literature. Embedded within the unit were many possibilities of connecting home and school. For instance, we began one meeting with a name interview. With a partner, we shared information about our names and their origins. Then, we discussed the possibility of having children interview family members about family stories including ones relating how the children were named.

- The power of drama was demonstrated through activities at two separate meetings. First, using the book, *Tomas and the Library Lady* (Mora, 1997), a Readers' Theater script was created and performed. This wonderful book relates the story of Tomas Rivera as a young Hispanic migrant and the power of reading and books in his life. The Readers' Theater script served as both an introduction to the book, available in both English and Spanish, and to the technique of Readers' Theater. Next, after a read aloud from *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant (1982), we involved group members in drama activities and encouraged them to use drama to enhance literacy through participatory activities in the classroom and at home.

- Since celebrations (e.g., birthdays, holidays, festivals) supply rich language opportunities, in December, we turned to a discussion of these special events. The potential for reading holiday stories, singing special songs, or telling stories about customs related to the holidays or family traditions offers many language building avenues for home or school.

- Finally, poems were used to begin each session and as a transition activity. Using a read aloud and choral response format to model the use of poetry and techniques for sharing poetry at home and at school, participants stayed actively involved in our evenings of learning and sharing.

Planning and Implementing Family Literacy Projects

In the spring, we put our background building study group sessions to work as each campus began to build a customized project for family literacy. As an incentive to more actively involve parents in literacy efforts at home and at the school, all schools were provided $1,000 in seed money to fund a family literacy project at their school. With this initial start, schools were encouraged to develop their projects into ongoing initiatives that would develop further or become annual events. The university coaches and Reading Department supported the process through follow-up meetings in the spring to provide technical assistance and on-going support for the campus-based family literacy projects. At the end of each meeting, time for discussion, clarification, and feedback was provided as each school moved to submit a proposal of their project for review by the university coaches.

Assessment of Proposed Projects

Prior to final submission of their proposals, the group conducted an intensive feedback session. To help in fine-tuning the projects, the university coaches developed a template, based on an article shared earlier in the background building sessions, that noted the five criteria for successful urban outreach efforts (Come & Fredericks, 1995). As campuses described their project, participants provided verbal and written feedback centered on the following five criteria for successful urban outreach efforts:

- Meets the expressed needs and wishes of parents.

- Promotes a spirit of shared responsibility.

- Active involvement of parents in decision making and follow through on decisions.

- Establishment of open lines of communication.

- Long-term commitment to continuous and sustained involvement.

Focusing Questions

Guiding questions followed each criterion to assist each campus in assessing their proposal.

- ·Does the proposal reflect this criterion?

- If yes, how was the school able to foster shared responsibility?

- How is shared responsibility reflected in the proposal?

- What feedback can you offer in the area of shared responsibility to help the school fine-tune their project?

The next step after background building, project brainstorming, and discussion was submission of a project proposal to the university coaches. After approval by the university coaches, the proposal was submitted to the Dallas Reading Plan Office for funding. Schools implemented their projects prior to the last April meeting date and then, provided feedback to the group regarding the project's effectiveness.

Family Literacy Project Examples

Reflecting the diversity of our family literacy partnership, the campus-based projects mirrored the variety of our group and the many campus-based needs. Strategies such as book giveaways were included in many school projects as a means of fostering a print rich environment at home. Additionally, projects incorporated many topics discussed in our background building sessions such as drama and games as literacy building opportunities. The range of family literacy options included the following school projects.

- A Saturday Parent University Clinic furnished concurrent sessions including a demonstration of playing age appropriate games with children as literacy activities, a presentation on how to make reading fun, a Food Pyramid Game demonstration by a representative from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, and a session on word usage and self esteem.

- A make and take workshop involved parents in constructing literacy props for home activities.

- A puppet theater performed at one school followed by a participatory workshop on making sock and paper bag puppets as a literacy activity at home.

- Supporting the literacy education of parents through ESL and GED classes as well as a communication workshop, Can We Talk, to foster effective communication between children and adults was the focus of another school's project.

- Finally, Cultural Awareness Day at one school included a public library representative offering information on library services and helping families secure library cards, a Spanish language radio broadcast interview with a bilingual teacher talking about strategies to foster family literacy, and a motivational Hispanic speaker stressing the importance of reading aloud to children.

Assessment of Ongoing Family Literacy Activities

In addition to the follow up meetings on campus-based family literacy projects, the study groups worked to collaboratively develop an assessment of the current levels of family literacy activities taking place in children's homes. Stemming from initial discussions prior to the beginning of the project, discussions at early sessions, and the research addressing family literacy efforts, various areas surfaced that might be possible ones to highlight on the survey of family literacy. From these initial areas, the university coaches drafted a straw document and took this initial effort to the whole group for feedback. The group reacted to the draft, providing feedback that was incorporated into the final version of the survey. The final version was presented to the group and the method for collecting the data was demonstrated to the participating members.

To facilitate the process of K-3 grade teachers administering the survey to their classes, the university coaches suggested using overhead transparencies and having the teachers walk through the survey with their classes and then record the data on the overhead. After the university coaches demonstrated this technique at an early spring meeting, each school was provided a master of the survey and a box of transparencies. Group members took the survey and a box of overheads back to their campuses. Each school used the box of overheads to make transparencies of the survey and distribute these to each K-3 grade teacher. Campus teams coordinated the administration of the assessment instrument during the early spring semester 1999. Teachers orally conducted the survey with their classes and wrote student responses on the overheads. Schools were given a deadline by which all data was to be collected and submitted for tabulation to the university coaches. Once data was tabulated, this information was organized and presented to the Family Literacy Project members at our final meeting.

The survey was composed of 10 simple, open-ended response items centered on literacy activities in the home. Children were asked what literacy activities and materials they witnessed at home, such as parents reading aloud or modeling reading and writing, computer use, and the variety of print matter found at home. Once data was submitted and tallied, we discovered some interesting information. The results reflected a range of activities that supported children's literacy development were occurring in homes. According to our child participants, "Parents" were cited twice as often as any other read aloud provider. However, siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts/uncles, friends, other children, and daycare providers were also mentioned as leaders of read aloud experiences. What kinds of books were being read? At the moment, the most popular choice was the "Arthur" books by Marc Brown. This may be a tie-in with a new and popular television program based on the Arthur books. It is also gratifying to note, however, that 30 other different titles were specifically mentioned by the children surveyed, including: *Clifford, The Three Little Pigs, Cinderella,* Dr. Seuss books, *Beauty and the Beast, Winnie the Pooh,* "Goosebumps" books, and the Bible. Children also noted that their families read all kinds of printed matter. The top four favorites, in descending order, were:

- The newspaper
- Magazines
- Books
- The Bible

In addition to these types, children reported reading many forms of "everyday" or "environmental" print, including the mail, letters, cookbooks, instructions, the computer, the dictionary, textbooks, homework, signs and billboards, comics, poetry, diaries, catalogs, the TV guide, the phone book, greeting cards, Mapsco, work "stuff," puzzles, coupon books, and bills. And where do families get their reading material? From the library, twice as often as from any other source. But also from grocery stores, bookstores, friends and neighbors, bookclubs, bookfairs, through the mail, at the barber's, at garage sales, at work, at discount and other stores, at church, from school, at the gas station, at the daycare center, and at the hospital.

We asked children about the presence of writing experiences in the home. "What kinds of writing have you seen your family do at home?" Their most frequent response was "letters," "checks," and "grocery lists." Again, many examples of "everyday" or authentic writing activities were also volunteered, including writing on the computer, notes, homework, applications, menus, songs, addresses, resumes, phone numbers, orders, invitations, poems, journals, cards, money orders, and directions.

We wondered about oral literacies, too, such as storytelling. Did families still share stories orally? What kind? This is what the children told us. Parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, and aunts/uncles tell stories at home. What kind of stories? The most popular were ghost stories! But children were also listening to family stories, original stories, bedtime stories, and "once upon a time" stories. Singing and songs interested us, too. Here was yet another oral venue for developing literacy. Again, in nearly all the classrooms, children reported singing in the home. Parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, grandparents, and friends sang songs from the radio and religious songs, more than any other. Other kinds of singing at home included holiday songs, songs from TV, bedtime songs, songs from tapes and CDs, and family songs.

What about non-print media? National statistics tell us children watch plenty of television. Our survey revealed that children prefer cartoons and videos to other forms of media entertainment, in general. They also mentioned, but with much less frequency, school programs, movies, holiday programs, and television sitcoms.

Homework is a literacy activity which actively links home and school. We wondered whether families were involved in this particular literacy activity, too. The results were somewhat mixed. Parents and siblings helped with homework three times as often as any other source of support. Aunts/uncles, grandparents, daycare providers, friends, and cousins were also noted as helping with homework. Interestingly, "no one" [helps me with my homework] was cited as often as these latter sources.

Finally, our collaborative group was very curious about what activities might bring family members to the school campus. We were actively seeking meaningful ways to host families on campus. Thus we asked, "What brings your family to school?" Parent-teacher conferences were named twice as often as any other occasion. Next were PTA meetings, special programs, honor assemblies, volunteering, field day, and pick up/drop off.

Although we knew many of the families we worked with would not necessarily own home computers, we wanted to recognize this source of literacy activity in our survey. Thus we also asked the children, "Do you have a computer at home?" and "What kinds of things does your family use the computer for?" Although we do not have exact data on the number of computers in the homes involved, we know the chief use of the computer for this population was games. This application was mentioned twice as often as the next most popular activity: writing. Other uses included reading, work, typing, math, and homework.

To summarize the results, according to the children in our survey, parents read aloud "Arthur" books, the newspaper, magazines, books, in general, and the Bible, specifically. They got their books primarily from the library. They also shared a variety of environmental print. Their modeling of writing consisted primarily of letters, checks, and grocery lists, as well as other forms of writing for authentic "real life" purposes. Storytelling occurred, too, again with parents dominating. What kinds of stories? Ghost stories! But also family stories, original stories, bedtime stories, and "once upon a time" stories. Families sang, too. Parents and siblings shared songs, especially songs from the radio and religious songs. Overwhelming favorites for nonprint media were cartoons and videos. Who helps with homework? Parents and siblings were cited three times as often as any other source. Unfortunately, "no one" helping with homework was then listed as often as aunts/uncles, grandparents, daycare providers, friends, and cousins. Parent-teacher conferences were reported twice as often as any other occasion for bringing parents to school, but a variety of other connections were also identified. And for those who have access to computers, the number one use of them was for games.

Collecting this data was a powerful exercise in many ways. First of all, the extensive collaboration in the development of the survey instrument and in planning its administration was unique. Many perspectives were represented in the endeavor. Second, the very process of gathering the data was enlightening for all the participants. In many cases, we broadened the definition of literacy which many held, teachers and children included. In this urban setting, it was encouraging to see that many parents were active participants in their children's literacy development, particularly in the area of reading aloud, telling stories, sharing songs, helping with homework, and coming to school for conferences. Environmental print and authentic, everyday writing were also vehicles for promoting literacy which many parents made use of. Interestingly, religious songs and the Bible were still frequent sources of literacy activity in many of the homes of these students.

There was also a "meta-value" to conducting the survey in that simply asking these questions led us all to consider what kinds of literacy connections might be possible between home and school. For example, teachers may now be prompted to place greater value on the storytelling and singing familiar to their students in the home. Children may be spurred to urge their parents to help with homework or come visit the school, knowing that the teacher has clearly placed a value on these practices at school.

Our classroom-based surveys attempted to take a "snapshot" of a variety of home literacy activities. As this surveying process evolved, it also became another means of promoting a broader and more inclusive understanding of literacy, even multiple literacies, among the different participants. One final outcome was a bit of a surprise. As we worked to plan literacy development projects in these various urban settings, it also helped us see the many literacy activities which were already occurring in these homes. Instead of taking a "deficit" view of family literacy, we looked to see what kinds of literacy activities were already in place. So often we tend to view the "glass" of urban literacy as "half empty." Our collaborative participation in this investigation helped us all to see this same "glass" as "half full."

Special Family Literacy Events

In addition to our regular meetings, two other special events were held during our collaborative effort. What did we learn from these two participatory experiences? We discovered that learning can take place in many settings and without direct instruction. For a March meeting, the group voted to attend a reading by the author, Sapphire. The author's book, *Push,* relates the story of a young girl who has experienced many incredible hardships and who in her teen years finally encounters a teacher who uses reading and the literacy/learning process to turn the young girl's life around.

Next, was a visit by storytellers who performed on a Saturday morning at Old City Park in Dallas, an open air museum featuring old homes and buildings. Sitting on the front porch or in front of the general store, the storytellers shared this rich, oral tradition with teachers, families, and children from our collaborative partnership schools.

Evaluation of the Project

At the last meeting of the Family Literacy Project, two forms of feedback were utilized to evaluate the project. First, the group responded to a modified chart modeled after Ogle's (1986) KWL technique. The idea was to draw the school's attention back to the criteria for effective outreach and to have them reflect on this year long effort. Using three columns (what we know, what we did, what we learned) each campus team noted what they knew from the research on urban outreach programs, what each individual campus did at their school in response to the research presented over the course of the project, and what the schools learned in their participation in the group and their efforts back at their campuses. One of the biggest learnings for schools from the year long project was the need to work more closely with families and to listen to their input and feedback rather than putting together programs based on the school's perceptions of what was needed.

Finally, a summative evaluation was administered focusing on increases in family literacy resulting from the school's participation in the Family Literacy Project, increases in teacher/administrator awareness, the effectiveness of the group study model, and useful aspects of the project. Participants gave the project high marks noting that the study group model had proved very beneficial as a beginning point for awareness of issues and possibilities.

Conclusion

Given increased literacy demands in today's society, student literacy is a critical area. Family literacy holds great promise in its ability to foster language and literacy development. The collaborative project between the Dallas Public Schools and the University of Texas at Arlington worked to connect teachers and administrators with families and community members to discuss the promise and process of family literacy.

The family literacy partners from the Dallas Public Schools were not the only ones involved in the learning process. We learned a great deal from this year long effort as well. A few of our most important findings include the following.

- Collaboration takes time in terms of logistical arrangements and participant ownership.

- Partnerships efforts fare better than isolated services directed by the school alone.

- We must strive to include and involve parents in meaningful ways in our discussions and partnership efforts.

- Active involvement of all parties in the collaborative effort through hands-on activities, field trips, etc. produces the best results.

For us, the Family Literacy Project was a meaningful connection with teachers, administrators, parents, and children. Families can contribute in powerful ways to a child's literacy development, but sometimes they need a better sense of direction. We must make sure that every resource is tapped to foster our children's language abilities.

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Appendix

Outline of Family Literacy Project

Date	Activity
August 1998	• Professors make initial contact with Director of the Dallas Reading Plan • Meetings to discuss options for a family literacy project
September 1998	• Draft proposal of possible project • Selection of partner schools for collaborative effort
October 1998	• Preliminary meeting with support services and principals from selected schools to gather input • Final proposal drafted
November 1998–January 1999	• Participants from partner schools selected from pool of volunteers • Study group meetings with professors and partner school participants • Meetings to craft customized family literacy projects for each partner school
January 1999–February 1999	• Technical assistance from university coaches and ongoing support from partner schools
January 1999–March 1999	• Collaboratively develop an assessment of current levels of family literacy activities • Implement family literacy survey • Intensive feedback session to fine tune projects • Submission of final projects for approval of university coaches • Implementation of projects
April 1999	• Final session to share results of family literacy projects • Results of family literacy survey shared • Evaluation of collaborative partnership

Teaching Underprepared College Readers: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

Chester H. Laine, Michaeline Laine, Terry Bullock

In this article, at the turn of the new millennium, we explore some of the questions that face those who work in college developmental reading settings, looking at where we have been and where we are going. We will describe college developmental reading programs with attention to the history of the programs, recent changes and current trends, and issues and challenges for the future.

Where we have been?

Institutions of higher learning have been accepting students who did not meet their academic standards for almost 200 years (Casazza, 1999). Over the past century, many college reading teachers have also struggled with ways to meet the needs of these underprepared college students. Although "how to study" and reading remediation courses were available at many colleges and universities during the first half of the last century, most formal college developmental reading programs emerged during the 1970s and 1980s (Bullock, Madden, & Mallery, 1990).

During the past decade, there has been an increase in college developmental reading programs; these programs were present at 47% of colleges and universities in the late 1980s and at 57% of colleges and universities in the late 1990s (Laine, Laine, & Bullock, 1999). Some of this increase is due to decreased enrollments in institutions of higher learning. Historically, as colleges and universities experienced declines in student enrollment, they recruited increasing numbers of underprepared students. They needed to admit developmental students to survive financially (Landberg, 1993). Approximately 30% of all students entering college have some type of academic deficiency (NCES, 1996). The educational challenge is to provide a meaningful curriculum for these underprepared postsecondary students.

Do college developmental reading courses make a difference?

College developmental reading courses do make a difference. With appropriate assistance, underprepared college students succeed. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1996) less than 30% of all those who score in the bottom half of the distribution on achievement tests when they enter college eventually obtain a baccalaureate degree. However, according to the data from the National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan & Bonham, 1992), of those students scoring in the bottom half of this distribution and participating in developmental education, approximately 40% earn degrees. That is very close to the national average of 45.6% for all students entering universities (NCES, 1996). Spruiell's (1995) ten-year study also documented the positive effects of college developmental reading courses on the academic success of underprepared college students. In addition to academic success, college developmental reading courses can have a positive impact on self-esteem (Gillespie, 1993; Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, & Roy, 1984).

What is our theoretical frame?

College developmental reading programs are increasingly moving away from a remedial/developmental paradigm and toward a learner-centered constructivist frame. Constructivist theory is not new. It is derived from the work of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, among others. The term constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves—each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning—as he or she learns. For the college developmental reading teacher who holds a constructivist perspective, learning is making meaning. The consequences of this constructivist view are twofold. College developmental reading teachers (1) must focus on the reader (not on the texts or the lessons being taught), and (2) must realize that all knowledge is rooted in the meaning that the reader, or the community of readers, constructs.

Although there is an array of constructivist perspectives, there is agreement on a large number of issues, for example, on the role of the teacher and learner. It is perhaps best described in von Glasersfeld's (1995) constructivist conception of learning. He argues that teachers play the role of a midwife in the birth of understanding as opposed to a mechanic in the transfer of knowledge. The role of the college developmental reading teacher in the 21st century is not to dispense knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and incentives to build it up (von Glasersfeld, 1996). Mayer (1996) describes constructivist teachers as guides, learners, and sense makers. In Gergen's (1995) view, constructivist teachers are coordinators, facilitators, resource advisors, tutors, and coaches.

What is the focus of our work?

Given this theoretical frame, what is the focus of our work? Traditionally, many college developmental programs divided knowledge into discrete disciplines. The composition faculty were distinct from the reading faculty. Mathematics and the humanities were unrelated. That is beginning to change. Laine, Laine, and Bullock (1999) found that many college developmental reading teachers now engage in cross-curricular work and multi-disciplinary efforts. Indeed, although 40% of the programs still maintain a developmental reading focus, 23% report a broader focus, including general study skills courses, paired reading and content courses, and integrated reading and writing courses.

The knowledge explosion witnessed in the last half of this century will certainly pale in comparison to the expansion of knowledge in the next century. Simply helping students read academic texts, the traditional focus of college developmental reading teachers, would be a very narrow focus in the 21st century. We can be certain that higher levels of literacy, sometimes called "high literacy" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), will be required of our students. Langer (1997) refers to this higher level of literacy as "learning mindfully." She contrasts mindful learning with top-down learning (lectures) and with bottom-up learning (learning from direct experience). She describes mindful learning as "sideways learning," learning "with an openness to novelty and actively noticing differences, contexts and perspectives" (p. 23).

To help our underprepared college students cope with this knowledge explosion and the demands of the Information Age, we must refine our focus. This higher literacy includes oral and visual literary, as well as reading and writing. Monitoring one's own thinking, grasping diverse ideas and beliefs, examining multiple perspectives, working in collaboration with diverse individuals, and sharing knowledge to solve problems are just some of the elements of this higher literacy. This "mindful learning," or high literacy, must be the focus of college developmental reading teachers as we enter the new millennium.

Who are our students?

College developmental reading programs serve traditional and non-traditional students who are underprepared for college level courses. Some have high school degrees and some have general education degrees (GED). Many two-year, open-access colleges accept students who have not passed state-mandated proficiency tests or received high school diplomas. Traditional undergraduate students are generally between the ages of 18 and 24. Students who are 25 or older are considered non-traditional.

The age distribution of students enrolled in college developmental reading courses remained fairly stable over the past decade (Laine, Laine, & Bullock, 1999). On average, 63% are 17 to 22. Twenty-one percent are between 23 and 30. Eleven percent are between 31 and 40. Only 5% of the students are over 40 years of age. It is interesting to note that the number of non-traditional students remained about the same over the past 10-year period.

Who does the teaching?

In the past, college developmental reading programs often hired faculty without training in the teaching of reading. The role of the "reading teacher" was to help underprepared students unlock content textbooks. The teacher was viewed as the sole source of knowledge in the classroom and the assumption was that any expert in the discipline could teach someone else to read that content.

However, as we enter the new millennium, college developmental faculty have increased training in reading and more academic training in general. Laine, Laine, and Bullock (1999) found that the majority of reading programs require candidates (both full and part-time positions) to hold a master's degree. Eighty-eight percent hold a master's degree and 2% hold a doctorate. Once they are hired, college developmental reading faculty participate in regular and periodic evaluations; 82% of the college developmental reading programs are required to submit annual evaluations of program faculty

Support staff are also critical to the success of developmental reading programs. The staff most commonly used in these programs are tutors (used in 72% of the programs) and counselors (used in 48% of the programs). Three quarters of developmental reading programs provide tutoring and skills assistance as part of the course (Laine, Laine & Bullock, 1999). In some programs, professional and volunteer tutors work side-by-side with the course instructors. Ninety percent of the tutors currently working in college developmental reading programs have advanced degrees.

What are the roles played by teachers and students?

In the past, the responsibility for learning rested squarely on the shoulders of college developmental students. Now, consistent with a constructivist perspective, students and teachers are more likely to share that role. Underprepared college students learn by applying concepts and by engaging in the learning and thinking processes. College developmental settings, more than many others, are collaborative (Cullum, 1991). According to Carriuolo (1994), "developmental educators have long favored collaborative learning and know how to make it effective" (p. B2). Further support for collaborative learning comes from Kaiden (1998). She reports that students need collaborative peer groups to discuss texts and to improve their understanding of passages. Collaborative learning techniques are often a part of small group instruction in college developmental reading programs. Proponents of collaborative learning, such as Wells, Chang, and Maher (1990), view learning as a transaction among learners, knowledge, and experts.

The roles of the learners and the "experts" are interchangeable during collaborative learning. For example, students have opportunities to work with other members of the learning community, such as the instructor, tutors, or peers. In these activities, students collaborate with their peers to negotiate meaning. Cazden (1986) reports that classrooms can become, in this way, a setting for interactions among peers. As students collaborate with their peers, they actively make decisions about audience and purpose and become more independent, depending less on the teacher and more on themselves and their peers to help them understand.

What instructional formats are used?

In the past, many college developmental reading teachers delivered instruction through lectures. However, class sizes in college developmental reading programs are growing smaller, allowing opportunities for more innovative instructional strategies. Laine,

Laine, & Bullock (1999) report that a little more than half (52%) of the college developmental reading programs have teacher/student ratios ranging from 1:11 to 1:20 and a much wider variety of presentation styles is being used, including self-paced learning, collaborative learning, learning communities, instruction adapted to varied leaning styles, service learning, distance learning, small group instruction, paired or fused courses, freshman seminars, supplemental instruction, strategic learning, and critical thinking. Reading and writing are taught together, in paired or integrated courses, more frequently than they were a decade ago.

Research, such as found in Atwell's *In the Middle* (1987) and Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* (1986), supports such changes in instructional format. Henry's studies (1992, 1995, 1997) show that the workshop approach described by Atwell is being employed effectively with underprepared college readers and writers in a wide range of settings. Henry immerses her students in authentic reading experiences and urges other college reading educators to encourage their colleagues to do the same: "Instead of caving in to pressure to teach our students to 'read,' why not encourage our colleagues to make real reading the foundation of their courses?" (p.140). Using a "workshop" format, students are given opportunities to engage in real reading and writing. Underprepared college students in these classes select reading materials from classroom mini-libraries or bring fiction and non-fiction from outside the classroom. The conventions of grammar, writing mechanics, and summary writing are more frequently taught in mini-lessons.

A study of 154 college developmental reading students, conducted by Morris (1995) over two semesters, examined five teachers using a readers' workshop format and three teachers using traditional instruction. Her results support the effectiveness of a reading workshop format with students involved in sustained silent reading, self-selected reading, and writing to improve reading. Reading workshop was at least as effective as traditional instruction in increasing levels of reading achievement and was more effective in generating positive attitudes toward reading.

Landberg (1993) explored yet another related format, the use of socio-psycholinguistic teaching strategies. Surveys, sent to 224 college developmental reading teachers and to 28 experts in the fields of linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and socio-psycholinguistics throughout the United States, revealed that both practitioners and experts agreed that socio-psycholinguistic teaching strategies were useful, particularly with developmental college students.

In the past, college developmental reading teachers designed courses based on what they knew how to teach. Now, what the students need to know to function in a complex world is the basis of new courses emerging in college developmental reading programs. The reality for college developmental educators is that academically underprepared students need to be served. Programs must be designed to help students develop the academic strategies needed to succeed in college. Curriculum designed to include meaningful reading and writing growth is necessary.

What does the future hold for college developmental reading programs?

Although it is a daunting task to predict the changing nature of college developmental reading programs in the 21st century, much less in the next millennium, in this final section, we will speculate about several developments that hold promise for the future: the push for mandatory assessment, the role of technology, the advent of service learning, and the impact of critical pedagogy.

College developmental reading programs currently face a push for mandatory assessment and placement. In the past, survival and maintaining the status quo were the thrusts of planning in many college developmental reading programs. Frequently, the goal was to preserve the traditional values and systems. Universities and colleges looked to developmental programs to help them retain more underprepared students. Currently, college developmental reading programs not only help to keep students in college during an era of dwindling enrollments, but also provide meaningful and measurable support for the academically underprepared. For this reason, some research calls for mandatory assessment and placement in developmental courses. Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1997) report that "mandatory placement insures that larger numbers of weaker students participate in developmental programs" (p. 6). They report that when mandatory placement is part of a college developmental program, there is higher retention at both two-year and four-year institutions. This higher retention is largely due to increased success in developmental reading, mathematics and writing courses.

Another important and challenging aspect of developmental reading education today is the use of technology, particularly computer-based projects and environments. Many developmental educators were trained to conduct library research through the use of card catalogs, readers' guides, and indices of current periodicals. Given this background, current technology—use of Muds (Multi-user

Domains), E-mail, distance learning, bibliographic search engines, Usenet groups, and the World Wide Web—can seem overwhelming.

However, despite their trepidation, the benefits of this new technology are evident to college developmental reading teachers. Increasingly, they perceive the links among constructivism, technology and learning. They see support for the principles of constructivism in the environments, contexts and authentic "worlds" their students can experience and explore. Stefl-Mabry (1998) reports Web-based instruction promotes independent learning skills and individualized learning styles. Instructors as well as students can create their own home pages. Students can go out on the World Wide Web and find out what methods and strategies help other students to learn and study. They find their syllabi, assignments, and research information on the Web. College developmental readers and writers communicate with their instructors and fellow classmates through electronic mail. They explore current issues and course themes in chat rooms and they use Internet sources to conduct research. Today's developmental reading and writing instructors have their students share journal entries and literary letters via electronic mail and, through the use of some new interactive technology, use slide shows, Power Point demonstrations, and conference rooms to create environments where students can practice using their emerging reading and writing strategies in more authentic contexts.

Distance education has emerged as perhaps the most rapidly growing form of instructional technology. In fact, the term "distance education" has been applied to a wide spectrum of instructional forms, including print, radio, television, satellite, and computer education (Dede, 1996, Peters, 1993). A particularly appropriate technology for developmental reading instruction, distance education appeals to non-traditional students, because it is cost effective and accessible. It has served as both an innovative instructional tool and an effective way to meet the needs of a larger, more diverse student body. An interesting distance learning portal is <http://www/hoyle.com/distance.html>.

With the growth worldwide of teaching and learning on the Internet, there has been increased concern about the nature and quality of online higher education. The National Education Association sponsored a study of good distance learning programs and recently published a list of 24 benchmarks of quality distance learning. The Web location is <http://www.ihep.com/PR17.html>. To formulate the benchmarks, the authors identified practical strategies being used by U.S. colleges considered to be leaders in online distance education.

In yet another innovation, college teachers are creating service learning courses that integrate their developmental reading curriculum with community service. Students read and discuss social issues in the classroom setting, decide on a problem, research the problem on the Web, write multiple drafts of their papers, work in a community service setting, and publish their papers on the Internet Writing Project. Herzberg (1994) claims that "writing personal responses to community service experiences is an important part of processing the experiences" (p. 309). Service learning provides opportunities for developmental students to read and write authentic texts while developing reading, writing, and critical thinking strategies and participating in community service.

Finally critical pedagogy, stimulated by the work of Paulo Freire (1970, 1994) and others, promises to play an increasingly important role in college developmental reading programs. Critical pedagogues around the world repeatedly make the point that a focus on instructional methods, alone, without the inclusion of critical engagement with issues of class, race, and gender, results in "an empty instructional shell, a technology of instruction rather than the heart and soul of true education" (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000, p. 90). In their examination of contemporary adult literacy programs, they argue that teachers in skills-based literacy programs often encounter problems with transfer, retention, and actual literacy growth. These are long-standing problems associated with the field of adult literacy. Purcell-Gates and Waterman (2000) argue for both process-based teaching and learning and critical engagement with significant social and political issues that are significant in the lives of the students. Through this process, students become active agents in their own transformation.

Purcell-Gates, Degener, and Jacobson (1998) conducted a survey of adult literacy programs across the United States and created a typology of programs along two instructional dimensions: (a) dialogic/monologic and (b) life-contextualized/decontextualized. From this survey research and their study of a Freirean-based adult literacy class, Purcell-Gates and Waterman (2000) draw some insights for adult education in other contexts. They have implications for college developmental reading programs. They argue that teachers and students need to take part in a true dialogue, what they call dialogic, rather than monologic, learning. What are the power relationships between college developmental students and their teachers and administrators? In traditional programs, the teachers and administrators are the authority figures who make the critical decisions about what students need to know and how they need to learn it. This is monologic learning. In dialogic situations, teachers work in very specific ways—the deep, sociocultural ways advocated by Paulo Freire—to learn about their students. In a dialogic program, teachers become absolutely familiar with their students, their lives, their histories, their languages, and their present sociocultural contexts. Using this notion of critical pedagogy, college developmental reading teachers and their students learn together.

The other dimension that emerged from the typology report (Purcell-Gates, et al., 1998) was the life-contextualized/decontextualized dimension. To what extent do college developmental reading programs reflect real-life, authentic reading and writing activities and materials in their instruction? Purcell-Gates and Waterman (2000) argue that the concept of life-contextualized learning is often very complex and difficult to understand. The authors of the typology define this construct as "literacy work grounded in the life of the student outside of the classroom" (Purcell-Gates, et al., 1998, p.2). How often do we survey our college developmental students to determine why they need to improve their literacy skills? How often are our materials and activities grounded in these real-life purposes?

Limnality is the recognition that persons on the margins of society are pregnant with possibilities for transforming society (Pitman, 1987; Savage, 1988). As developmental reading teachers we are certainly on the margins of academic society. Although we lack any obvious signs of power, as teachers and researchers, we can form coalitions and become agents for change. The future of developmental reading education remains in the hands of creative and well trained instructors who make use of current research, pedagogy and technology to change the status quo and enhance their students' learning.

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What are Children Learning About Police Officers From Children's Literature?

Cindy Gillespie Hendricks,
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Everyone remembers at least one of the following famous television or movie police officers: *Dragnet's* Sergeant Joe Friday, *Adam-12's* Malloy, *In the Heat of the Night*'s Tubbs and Gillespie, *Miami Vice's* Rico and Sunny, Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry Callahan, Bruce Willis' McClane, Hal Linden's Barney Miller, and Peter Falk's Columbo. These characters were part of television's past and are currently still available for viewing. More current police programs, *Law & Order* and *NYPD Blue*, for example, continue to provide viewers with an arm-chair view of policing. Not only are we able to view fictional police, with the onset of reality-based television, we are also able to see actual footage of police officers at work in shows like *COPS* and *Real TV*.

Some of the aforementioned television shows about police officers offered and continue to offer violence, mystery, intrigue, and fast-paced action, leading viewers to believe that the role of the police officer is confined to law enforcement: preventing crime, detecting crime, and apprehending criminals (Langworthy & Travis, 1994). However, according to Skolnick and Bayley (1986), this perception is incorrect: "Only 'Dirty Harry' has his lunch disturbed by a bank robbery in progress" (p. 4) and "most officers on patrol do not stumble across felony crimes in progress—only Dirty Harry does" (p. 4).

The Reality of Policing

This crime-fighter image does not accurately depict the daily roles and responsibilities of police officers (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1998). According to Peak (1997), most Americans probably do not have an accurate idea of what the police really do. Goldstein suggests, "Anyone attempting to construct a workable definition of the police role will typically come away with old images shattered and with a new-found appreciation for the intricacies of police work"(1977, p. 21). In fact,

> The crime-fighter view certainly differs from the manner in which the police are portrayed in fictional movies and television programs. (Indeed, many present and former police practitioners agree that the most realistic television program on policing in the past decade or two was none other than *Barney Miller*). Yet the crime-fighter image persists, although it is extremely harmful to the public, police departments, and individual officers. (Peak, 1997, p. 58)

Even the reality-based television programs place a heavy emphasis on the crime-fighting role of the police for the purposes of ratings. These shows would not be on the airways very long if 15-20 minutes of each show were dedicated to a realistic portrayal of what police actually do.

While the general population maintains the image of police officers as crime fighters, focusing on their law enforcement role, the police actually perform roles that go beyond law enforcement to include order maintenance, crime prevention, and social service. Contemporary introductory textbooks on policing assert that 75-90% of police work falls into the order maintenance, crime prevention, and social service categories, while only 10-25% is in law enforcement (Dempsey, 1994; Langworthy & Travis, 1994: Roberg & Kuykendall, 1993). Thus, police officers actually spend the majority of their time on the job maintaining order, preventing crime and providing services to the community. Interestingly, Reiss (1971) found that the average police officer's typical day on duty does not involve a single arrest.

This difference between what police officers do and what citizens think they do is perpetuated by the portrayal of police officers on television and in movies. Each portrayal of law enforcement officers influences the general public's perceptions of what life is like as a police officer. Changing the image of the police officer from law enforcer to peacekeeper and public servant has been identified as a priority as increasing numbers of police agencies move toward community and problem-oriented policing (President's Crime Commission, 1967).

Because most citizens do not have direct contact with the police with the exception of the occasional traffic ticket (which most people deny they deserve), opinions about what police officers do are formed through vicarious experiences such as television, movies, and books. These vicarious experiences may either support or refute the public's, including children's, image of the roles and responsibilities of a police officer.

Given that television generally focuses on the law enforcement responsibilities of police officers, and that children watch approximately 3 to 5 hours of television every day (Spencer, 1993) or 22-28 hours per week (Global ChildNet, http://edie.cprost.sfu.ca/gcnet/ISS4-21c.html), it is more likely than not that children view police officers as crime fighters, rather than service providers since younger children experience difficulty separating fact from fiction as well as analyzing a character's actions, motives, and intentions. Van Evra (1999) supports this view:

> Child viewers...are in very active developmental stages. Their attitudes, beliefs, and ideas about the world, as well as physical and social skills, are taking form; and they absorb information from everywhere. Because of the considerable number of hours spent viewing television, however, television becomes a disproportionately informational and attitudinal source. (p. xii)

Correcting the image of what police officers do on a daily basis is one of the goals of community policing programs, since attitudes toward police are more negative among Blacks and Latinos and people with low socio-economic status (Sampson & Jeglum-Bartusch, 1999). According to Dempsey (1994), "Young children are a special target of the police in police community relations programs, because they are impressionable, and it is believed that if a child learns something early enough in life, it will stay with him or her forever" (p. 182). One program targeted toward children is the Officer Friendly program. The intent of this program is, "to encourage young children to view police officers as friends by getting to know one or more individual officers" (Dempsey, 1994, p. 184). The Officer Friendly program includes visits by police officers to public schools where they talk with children about their roles and responsibilities.

Another way that children may learn about the role and responsibilities of police officers is through children's literature. With the increased emphasis on literature in the elementary schools and the integration of literature into the content areas, one logical way to change these perceptions is through reading. Capitalizing on children's natural desires and interests to communicate with those in their world through language and reading, books provide children with additional information about their world through vicarious experiences. Because today's contemporary children's books tends to reflect our society and its problems, young children should have access to books that accurately portray the roles and responsibilities of police officers.

Few, if any, resources exist which provide lists of contemporary books for children about police officers, or that include police officers as characters. Therefore, this study was designed to (1) identify recently published children's books that focus on police officers and policing and (2) evaluate the portrayal of policing and police officers in children's literature.

Methods and Procedures

This study, designed to evaluate children's literature for its portrayal of policing and police officers, focused on recently published (1990 to present) children's books. Although over 30 books were found that met the publication date criterion, only 19 books focused on police and policing, meaning that policing and police officers were central to the theme or plot of the book. The remaining 11 books simply mentioned the police as a part of the plot, but the officers were not central to the plot or theme of the book. For example, one book mentioned that a police officer was called and arrived at the scene. No further discussion followed regarding what the officer did or how the officer handled the situation. Thus, the discussion of books will be limited to the 19 books that met the publication criterion and the content criterion.

Each book was read and summarized. Since many introductory policing textbooks identify police roles and responsibilities as falling into one of three categories (law enforcement, peacekeeping, and public service), each book was read again to determine whether it focused on the law enforcement, peacekeeping, or public service aspect of policing. Books were then identified as to which of the roles was the focus of the book. A fourth category, total responsibilities, was added for those books emphasizing all aspects of policing.

Finally, each book was evaluated based on the image of the police portrayed in the book. Each book was labeled as a positive or negative portrayal of police officers with supporting justification for the rating included in the analysis section of each book.

Findings

Summary of Book Content

Of the 19 books summarized for inclusion in this investigation, 16 discussed life as a police officer and/or various aspects of policing and portrayed what officers do on the job. Of the remaining books, *Sebastian (Super Sleuth) and the Impossible Crime* (Christian, 1992), was an account of a dog who solves a burglary; *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Nice Police Officer* (Gruelle, 1999) was about two children who help an officer, and *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (Rathmann, 1995) portrayed a police officer and his dog who gave safety speeches to children.

Eight of the books wove information about policing and police officers through story lines such as children visiting a police station (3 books), a stolen bike (2 books), the results of a police lecture (1 book), a bank robbery/bombing (1 book), and an investigation of a murder using bones (1 book). Eight of the books did not involve a story line; rather, these books told of what a police officer's job entailed and described how a police officer spends his/her day. Three books involved dogs; two books (*Patrol Dogs: Keeping the Peace*, Ring, 1994; *Detector Dogs: Hot on the Scent*, Ring, 1993) were non-fiction accounts of the role of canine officers, while the other, *Sebastian (Super Sleuth) and the Impossible Crime*, was a fictional account of a dog who wanted to solve crimes.

Classification of Books

Of the nineteen books read and analyzed (see Appendix), two of the books were identified as focusing on the public safety aspect of policing; nine books focused on law enforcement, while eight books were classified as portraying the total responsibilities of police officers (public service, law enforcement, peacekeeping). The category into which each book was placed is identified in parenthesis after the bibliographic data for each book (See Appendix).

Two books were categorized as emphasizing the public service aspects of policing. *I am a Police Officer* (Benjamin, 1995) and *Officer Buckle and Gloria* focused on police officers giving safety lectures at local schools.

Of the nine books classified as emphasizing the law enforcement aspect of policing, four books (*In My Neighborhood: Police Officers*, Bourgeois & LeFave, 1992; *Sebastian (Super Sleuth) and the Impossible Crime; Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Nice Police Officer; The Bone Detectives*, Jackson, 1996) focused on catching criminals (a bike thief, an art thief, a magic cooking stick thief, and murderer, respectively). *Risky Business* (Greenberg, 1996), *Patrol Dogs: Keeping the Peace*, and *Detector Dogs: Hot on the Scent* focused on special units (bomb squad and dogs) used to help police with the law enforcement aspect of their jobs. The two remaining books, *The Police Station* (Kallen, 1997) and *Police Patrol* (Winkleman, 1996) were also placed in this category because they emphasized tools and equipment necessary for officers to perform their law enforcer roles.

The remaining eight books (*A Day in the Life of a Police Officer*, Arnold, 1994; *Barney and B.J. Go to the Police Station*, Berenthal, 1998; *Great Places to Visit: Police Stations*, Cooper, 1992; *A Visit to the Police Station*, Hannum, 1993; *I'm Going to be a Police Officer*, Kunhardt, 1995; *What's It Like to be a ...Police Officer*, Pellowski, 1990; *Community Helpers: Police Officers*, Ready, 1997; *Sergeant Murphy's Busy Day*, Scarry, 1997) seemed to portray the law enforcement, public service, and peacekeeping aspects of policing. Generally, each of these books identified all aspects of policing to give a more complete picture of what being a police officer means and what a police officer actually does.

Analysis of Police Images

In terms of the positive and negative portrayals of police officers, all but three books portrayed policing and police officers in a very positive light. The officers were portrayed as hard-working, dedicated officers whose job is "to protect and to serve." All seemed to portray police roles and responsibilities accurately, although some, as mentioned earlier, were very limited in their coverage of the various aspects of police work.

The three books with negative images of police officers were: *Officer Buckle and Gloria; Sebastian (Super Sleuth) and the Impossible Crime;* and *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Nice Police Officer. Officer Buckle and Gloria* is positive in its portrayal of Officer Buckle and his desire to help school-age children. The story's message regarding teamwork is also positive; however, some readers may perceive overweight Officer Buckle as a self-centered officer who becomes jealous of the attention received by Gloria. The second book which may connote negative images is *Sebastian (Super Sleuth) and the Impossible Crime*. The book does positively portray the work of detectives in solving crimes; however, the fact that with all their knowledge and police work, a dog is more successful than the police at solving the case, may lead some to develop negative perceptions regarding the detectives' ability to solve crimes. Of all the books read and analyzed, the final book, *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the Nice Police Officer*, evokes the most negative image of police officers. The nice police officer is portrayed as a crying coward who doesn't want to make an arrest. He is unable to decide what to do until Raggedy Ann and Andy help him. All the decisions about what to do and how to handle the case are made by the two children. On a positive note, the book does portray the Nice Police Officer as one who doesn't like making arrests.

We would be remiss in our investigation if we did not include a side commentary regarding the contents of three of the books reviewed. While each of the three books connotes a positive image of policing and police officers, each book contains some information that may be upsetting to children, teachers and parents. The first book, *What's it Like to be a …Police Officer* may give readers the impression that police are always successful in their quests. Children may need to understand that not all lost bicycles are found and returned to their rightful owners. The message in this book could lead to disappointment for children who have lost things, or whose families have been burglarized, because police are not always successful in recovering stolen property.

The second book which may be problematic for children, teachers and parents alike is *Risky Business: Bomb Squad Officer*. This book contained a section on how to make bombs, including identifying common substances/chemicals found around the house, which may also be used to make bombs.

The final book, *Police Patrol* is a positive book about policing and police officers. However, the book contains an illustration of a prison, which shows three prisoners sitting at computers with a G.E.D. book sitting next to them. Two other inmates are shown listening to a radio while working in a wood shop with the word "PRIDE" written in colorful letters on the wall of the shop. This image may glorify prison for some readers, sending an incorrect message that prison isn't necessarily a bad place.

Discussion

Because much of today's contemporary fiction tends to reflect our society and its problems, books may be used to help children understand societal issues, such as policing and the roles and responsibilities of police officers. Reading stories that accurately portray the roles and responsibilities of police officers can influence children to view policing in a positive manner. The books that were read and analyzed for this investigation attempted not only to portray police officers in a positive manner, but to also accurately educate children about policing and the roles and responsibilities of police officers.

Using materials specifically geared for children (fact or fiction picture books or storybooks) may provide law enforcement officers with additional resources to be used in educating children about their roles and responsibilities. Programs such as Officer Friendly may be enhanced by including children's books in their presentations, particularly if the officers read the books to the children. Research continues to support the benefits of reading aloud to children and also supports the notion that children enjoy reading and listening to stories being read aloud. They also enjoy discussing what they read or heard. Discussion provides the means by which students demonstrate their understanding of the content and also by which students learn from each other. Such discussions may help students resolve the conflicting information about policing and police officers that children receive from television and movies as opposed to the information they would receive from the books included in this investigation.

Abraham Lincoln once said "Children are the persons who are going to carry on what you have started. They will sit where you are sitting. They will assume control of your cities, state, and nations. They will take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations. The fate of humanity is in their hands" (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1998). To prepare today's children to assume this monumental task, we must ensure that they are provided with accurate and appropriate information from which they can make informed decisions.

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Appendix

Book Summaries and Analyses

Arnold, E. (1994). *A day in the life of a police officer*. New York: Scholastic. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

This book follows Kathy Murphy, a female officer on the Cambridge, Massachusetts police force, throughout her eight-hour shift as she responds to calls mostly involving noise violations and stolen property. Police equipment and police vehicles are described. Details are provided regarding what a person might expect if he/she wanted to become a police officer. Several full color photos depict the inside of a police station as well as the police officer's uniform. Definitions of crucial terms allow the reader to understand vocabulary related to police work. Protection of the citizens and maintaining good relationships with them are emphasized throughout the book.

Analysis

The story line is simple: a female police officer patrols, does paper work, pulls over cars, and sits and observes the area that she is in charge of keeping safe. The police are involved in community policing as opposed to high-speed car chases and fighting violent crime. Teamwork is stressed throughout the book. Children who read this book will acquire knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of police officers and the equipment used on the job. This book portrays very positive image of the police.

Benjamin, C. (1995). I am a police officer. New York: Barron's Educational Services, Inc. (Public Service)

Summary

This book is about two police officers who are giving a safety lecture at a local school. During the presentation, the children ask the police officers what their jobs are like. On their way home, two children from the class observe the police officers in action. When they find a wallet and return it to the police station, they are given a tour of the entire facility. They are able to see the police officers doing different types of work, which makes the children want to become police officers. When they go home, they play police and try to help a friend find a missing kitten. When they finally find the missing kitten in the bushes, they comment on how they like helping others and how good it makes them feel.

Analysis

The police in this story are helpful to the children and answer their questions. The book begins with the police coming into the children's "territory," which would help children feel a little more comfortable. The story discusses the roles and responsibilities of police officers, detectives, and dispatchers. The police are all very helpful and polite to the children.

Bernthal, M. (1998). *Barney and B.J. go to the police station.* Allen, TX: Lyons Partnership. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

Barney and BJ visit the Plano Police Department, where an officer takes them on a tour. First, they see a swearing-in ceremony for new officers. The officer explains that the officers are promising to protect and help everyone. Then, he describes ways police officers help people and the different types of vehicles they use. They are shown a holding cell, the fingerprinting center, the dispatch area and the K-9 facility. The officer warns them not to bother the dogs while they are working. He explains that the dogs are trained to find things or people with their sense of smell, and to protect police officers. A police officer's uniform and the tools they use are described. He warns Barney and BJ that if they ever see a gun, they should leave it alone and inform an adult.

Analysis

A book such as this one can promote a positive image of police to children so they feel comfortable reporting a incident to the police. Police officers are shown fulfilling many different tasks including traffic directing, dispatching, and peace keeping through the use of photographs. The police officers guide Barney and BJ through the police station. The officers teach a lot of lessons about safety at school and the safety of firearms. Because of its use of a popular children's character, Barney the Purple Dinosaur, this book is an excellent resource to teach children about policing.

Bourgeois, P., & LaFave, K. (1992). *In my neighborhood: Police officers.* Buffalo: Kids Can Press Ltd. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

Natalie is awakened by a noise outside her window. Thinking the bicycle thieves are outside, she awakens her parents who call the police. Two officers respond. They explain that they didn't use their siren so as not to scare away the thief. The officers search the neighborhood and find nothing. On her way to school the next morning, Natalie sees a suspicious van parked by the school. She writes down the license plate number and tells her principal who calls the police. They catch the bike thieves. The story line follows the thieves through the criminal justice system. The different roles of the police, types of police officers, different means of transportation, and items carried by a police officer are described. The last few pages provide tips on staying safe in various situations.

Analysis

This story gives a positive overview of police officers' jobs. *In My Neighborhood: Police Officers* deals with almost everything that a policeman might do by weaving factual information about policing and police officers through a bike theft plot. This story encourages children not to be afraid to call the police. The story portrays policemen as intelligent, caring individuals who respond to all situations. The policemen's role was to serve and protect.

Christian, M. (1992). *Sebastian (super sleuth) and the impossible crime.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

This book is about a dog whose master is a policeman. A painting is mysteriously stolen from an art exhibit and Sebastian, the dog, wants to solve the case. The crime seems impossible to solve because no one had gone in or out of the room as guards were at every entrance. Yet, the painting is gone after the lights went out for only five seconds! Everyone is still in the room who had been there before and nothing else was altered. The police check out every possibility only to come up shorthanded. Eventually, Sebastian solves the case.

Analysis

Although written for children, the author provides insight into the process used by detectives to solve a crime. Trying to figure out motives, means and opportunity gives the perceptions of a very skilled and intelligent aspect of policing which may not normally be seen in other children's books. It shows the long hours and hard work that policemen work to solve a crime. This book provides children with an overview of a detective and shows how skillful policemen must be to logically think through clues.

Cooper, J. (1992). *Great places to visit: Police stations.* Vero Beach, FL: The Rourke Corporation, Inc. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

In this non-fiction book, Cooper provides a very brief and basic overview of policing. The book teaches children about the inner workings of a police station, and the lives of police officers. Special areas in a police station are also discussed including the fingerprint room and the dispatch room. The book covers topics such as job descriptions, police stations, officers, labs, programs, equipment, detectives, jails, suspects, different types of law enforcement and what activities go on in a police station. The author also provides definitions for nine police-related terms such as "beat" and "paddy wagon." Although the book is short, it discusses many things that may be unfamiliar to children.

Analysis

Cooper's officers provide many services to the public, such as helping people, searching for criminals, and preventing crime. Cooper strengthens this positive portrayal by ending the book with a description of the work that officers do with students and teachers, and many other organizations. Because of the way that Cooper presents the information, children who read this book will regard police officers as very caring individuals who strive to protect the community from danger, and deter criminal activity before it occurs. By including the glossary at the end of the book, Cooper also allows young readers to better understand some the lingo used in policing.

Greenberg, K. (1996). *Risky business: Bomb squad officer*. Woodbridge, CT: Blackbirch Press Book. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

This book begins with a man coming into a bank to rob it, claiming he has a bomb. Throughout this story, the author infuses a discussion of the dangerous job of a bomb squad officer. Photos are included of the tools that a bomb squad uses. The author also talked about the workings of the Newark Bomb Squad and how dogs help locate bombs by using their keen sense of smell. It also includes pictures and discussions of the New York Trade Center bombing, the Pan Am flight over Scotland, and the Oklahoma Federal Building bombing.

Analysis

Although the mood of the book is dismal due to its content, the author provided an interesting view of this topic by using a news story approach to explain what a bomb squad officer does and feels, emotionally and physically.

Quotes from real officers give this more of a story approach rather than an explanation of facts. Readers of this book will be taught the realities of being a bomb squad officer.

Gruelle, J. (1999). *Raggedy Ann and Andy and the nice police officer*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

Raggedy Ann and Andy find a crying policeman. He tells them that he must arrest Mr. Hooligooly and that this is his first arrest. Raggedy Ann convinces him to talk to Mr. Hooligooly. The police officer is scared to do that but decides it would be a good idea. The policeman finds out that a mean magician, who tricked the officer, is after a magic cooking stick. After some magical adventures, the mean magician is captured. Later Raggedy Ann, Andy and the nice police officer make the magician apologize for trying to steal the magic stick and he is set free by the nice police officer.

Analysis

Although these are classic children's characters, the portrayal of the police officer is very negative. Instead of the officer helping Raggedy Ann and Andy, they were helping him solve his problems. The scared officer, out-of-shape, also needed Raggedy Ann and Andy to help him figure out what was going on, what the correct course of action should be, and how to get the magician to jail. Additionally, children might conclude that jail is just a place to cool off because all the magician had to do to get out of jail was apologize for what he did. A positive spin on a generally negative portrayal of police officers is that one might conclude that officers don't really like arresting people and that officers are generally friendly people.

Hannum, D. (1993). *A visit to the police station*. Chicago: Regensteiner Publishing, Inc. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

This book chronicles an elementary class' visit to the Evanston, Illinois, police station. The tour guide, Officer Briggs, shows the children the communication center, a transport vehicle and the prisoner dock; then it's on to the squad car. Since the lights and sirens interest children, the officer allows them to sit behind the wheel. The children see the shooting range, jail cells, officers' exercise room, and the booking room where they learn about fingerprints and mugshots. The tourists also meet Officer Friendly, a puppet used when officers visit elementary schools to teach children about the law. The children are taught the importance of registering their bicycles and receive a bicycle license. At the end of the tour, the children receive a special police badge.

Analysis

This book appears to adequately represent a police department from a child's perspective. The children are taken on a tour by a police officer and are provided opportunities for hands-on experience. The book contains a great deal of information with numerous pictures on every page so the children are able to associate the words with the pictures. Readers would have a positive view of the police from this story. Although the job of the police officer is described as tedious, responsible, and fun, Officer Briggs tells the children how rewarding the job is. This would be a good book for children to read, particularly right before they visit the police station in their community.

Jackson, D. (1996). *The bone detectives*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

Forensics, the combination of modern medicine and policing, is the topic of this book, presented through an investigation conducted by Dr. Charney, one of 170 bone identification specialists in the U.S. With only 40 bones recovered (out of 200 in a normal body), Dr. Charney is to identify a body. Because there are only three types of skulls (Caucasian, Negroid and Mongoloid), Dr. Charney determines the skull is that of Mongoloid. Then, he examines the size and shape of the pubic bone and determines the victim is female. After determining race and sex, he uses the collarbone to determine the female is of average build and in her mid-twenties. This information, along with additional evidence, is then used to convict the woman's husband of murder.

Analysis

The medical field plays a large role in policing. This book shows how the medical profession and police personnel work together to solve crimes. Even though police may have only one strand of hair, with the help of the medical profession, they are able to identify victims and suspects. Without people like Dr. Charney, police would not be able to identify unknown bodies or their remains. The discussion is easy to follow and is presented in an interesting and realistic manner. Books like these may interest youngsters in the field of forensics and, hopefully, encourage them to become bone specialists.

Kallen, S. (1997). *The police station*. Edina, MN: Abdo & Daughters. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

This book describes some of the things that children would expect to see if they were to actually visit a police station. It briefly describes the officer's tools and his/her job, and discusses the different areas of the police station such as the dispatch room, and the police lab.

Analysis

Although the police station is the focus of this book, the responsibilities of the police officer doing different jobs throughout the police station are presented. It also briefly discusses the process a criminal would experience if brought to the police station. This book is geared toward the younger child; therefore, it portrays a very light-hearted, positive image of the police station.

Kunhardt, E. (1995). *I'm going to be a police officer*. New York: Scholastic Inc. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

The beginning of the story shows Father putting on his bulletproof vest, his holster, handcuffs, and other things that officers carry. Michelle and David visit the police station, get fingerprinted, and watch the daily routine at the police station. When the children leave, the book follows Dad's daily policing routine. He patrols the town on foot, and in his car, retrieves a lost dog, serves as a crossing guard, calls an ambulance, and, checks buildings for locked doors when he is on night patrol. He also encounters other officers as they are marking the tires of parked cars, and watches an officer check oxygen equipment in her car.

Analysis

The story is told from Michelle's perspective about her father who is a police officer. It follows him about in his daily activities, which involve community policing. By telling the story from a child's perspective, it connotes the image of the police officer as a family man. This book portrays the image of a positive, friendly police officer who the community can trust since they know him as their community's protector.

Pellowski, M. J. (1990). *What's it like to be a...police officer.* Mahwah: NJ: Troll Associates. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

Sandy and her father arrive at the police station, after Sandy's bike is stolen. While her father is filling out paperwork, Sandy asks the Sergeant about policing and becoming a police officer. The sergeant tells Sandy that police officers protect people and their belongings as well as enforce laws. He tells Sandy about the exams, the Police Academy, and the training sessions on first-aid, safety, self-defense, police behavior, and on the proper use of equipment. He explains that police officers have different roles and responsibilities like protecting neighborhoods, patrolling highways, working in labs, working with young people, and directing traffic.

Analysis

While Sergeant Conway aids Sandy in locating her missing bicycle, he provides insight as to what the police do and how they help people. Readers learn how the police are organized and the different roles of the various police officers. The view of the police is quite positive because Sergeant Conway willingly explains to Sandy what is required to become a police officer. This book teaches children that police officers will listen to them, protect them, and help them. The only negative aspect of this story is that it might give children a false sense of what the police are capable of accomplishing. Sandy is lucky to have her bicycle back; not all children are that lucky. Police do their best to help, but they are not always successful.

Rathmann, P. (1995). *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. (Public Service)

Summary

Officer Buckle travels between schools presenting safety tips to children. However, his presentations lead to boredom and inattentiveness. The Napville police department purchases a police dog named Gloria to help with the presentations. Instead of being bored and sleepy, the children watch and listen. Unbeknownst to Officer Buckle, Gloria is demonstrating safety tips. One day while viewing himself on television, Officer Buckle notices his listeners are more interested in watching Gloria perform, so he quit going to schools. Gloria continues, giving the presentations alone. She notices that things aren't the same. After receiving mail requesting he return, Officer Buckle and Gloria reunite. They realize that together they can make a difference, which leads to the last safety tip: stick with your buddy!

Analysis

The image of police officers is portrayed both positively and negatively in this book. Readers may view police as dull and boring. Additionally, readers may not develop an accurate portrayal of what a police officer's day is like or what a police dog is trained to do. Officer Buckle's only job seems to be giving speeches while Gloria's only job is to serve as a stage prop. One may also perceive Officer Buckle as self-centered, considering that he quit giving safety speeches because Gloria was getting more attention. On the positive side, today's police officers are not just crime solvers. Public relations is actually the job that most officers do on a daily basis. Giving safety speeches is Officer Buckle's service to the community. Children are likely to develop a positive image of police officers as nice, caring individuals who enjoy helping people, including children. In addition to the many safety tips provided, a subtle message (when working as a team one can accomplish so much more) is woven through the story as the plot.

Ready, D. (1997). *Community helpers: Police officers.* Mankato, MN: Bridgestone Books. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

This non-fiction children's book is part of a series entitled "Community Helpers." This book explains how police officers keep their community safe, and protect people and property from criminals. Topics covered include the role of police, the clothes they wear, the tools they use, the kind of automobiles they drive, the schooling required, the assistance officers receive, and the people they help. The duties of support personnel (dispatcher, photographers, and crime lab personnel) are also described. A glossary with words such as community, crime, detective, investigate, and law is provided.

Analysis

Children who read this book should develop a positive perception of the policing profession. This book portrays officers as important members of a community whose job is to be available to assist those in need. It accurately explains the work and training necessary to become an officer and describes the life of a police officer, including pictures of police officers at work and their equipment. The book spans the process of becoming a police officer from the initial training at the police academy to an overview of what they do after they become a police officer. At the end of the book is a page with definitions of difficult words. Readers will also enjoy the section that explains the process of taking fingerprints, and provides step-by-step instructions to take their own fingerprint samples.

Ring, E. (1994). *Patrol dogs: Keeping the peace.* Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

This book is about police dogs and how they work on the police force. It provides detailed descriptions of what kind of dogs become patrol dogs, the type of work they do, the intensive training regime involving both the dog and trainer, the relationship between the dog and its partner, and, finally, their usefulness as crime fighters. Once they've successfully completed their training, the dogs are certified as patrol dogs and are ready to work. Around the age of ten or twelve, the dogs trade in their badges for civilian tags. The author also included stories about some instances where dogs were used. The stories brought to life the magnificent jobs that the dogs perform and how heroic they really can be.

Analysis

This is an excellent book for young children to read to become familiar with what police dogs do, since some children are not aware that the police dogs are, indeed, police officers. Not only does the book highlight the training required for dogs to become police service dogs and the jobs they undertake once they are a part of the force, it also discusses the history behind dogs and policing. The author reassures readers that these dogs aren't mean and vicious creatures; they are normally friendly dogs who, when given a command, can chase, apprehend, and disarm a criminal. A positive image of the police, both in the pictures and their relationships with their dogs, emerges from the book.

Ring, E. (1993). *Detector dogs: Hot on the scent*. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

Police dogs (detector dogs) are the subject of this children's book. A dog's keen sense of smell, which is a million or more times better than a human's, is described. Ring discusses the types of dogs suited for police work and the characteristics needed for them to be successful. Readers will learn about the dogs' schooling or training which leads them to become specialists/detectives in one of four areas: Narcotics-detecting, bomb-detecting, accelerant-detecting, and body-detecting. Daily chores of police dogs include: patrolling roads, protecting people, tracking people, searching buildings, and controlling crowds. The book also discusses jobs outside of the law enforcement profession for which these dogs can be trained.

Analysis

Although dogs are the subject of this book, they, too, are considered K-9 police officers. This book is a very good resource for children. The author provides humorous stories about the dogs, as well as how officers in police departments, U.S. Customs, and the Department of Agriculture use the dogs in their every day jobs. This book includes some statistical information that is easy for young readers to understand, such as the number of working detector dogs and how much contraband the dogs have uncovered.

Scarry, R. (1997). *Sergeant Murphy's busy day.* New York: J.B. Communications. (Total Responsibilities)

Summary

This children's book details a day in the life of Sergeant Murphy, a police officer. His day starts with a call from the police station. Then he gets up and cooks breakfast for the family. He drives his daughter to school on his motorcycle. He is then off to his busy day at work. After he clears up a traffic jam, he receives a call from a boy at the supermarket who has become separated from his mother. Sergeant Murphy rushes to the supermarket, solves the problem and then leaves to go to the school to give a traffic safety lesson. After that, he coaches the soccer team. When practice is over, he picks up his daughter at school. When they arrive home, there is a cake for Sergeant Murphy from the mother of the boy involved in the supermarket incident.

Analysis

A police officer was the main character in this book. This book targets young children and tries to show them that police officers live ordinary lives when they are not at work. This book gives readers a positive view of police officers. The book shows and tells how hard their job is and that they are constantly helping people that are in need. This book has a lot of pictures of children interacting with the police officer, which suggests to young readers that it is good to talk to police officers and that they are nice people. The author is trying to convey that police officers are just like any other person except that their job is to help people when they have problems.

Winkleman, K. (1996). *Police patrol.* New York: Walker and Company. (Law Enforcement)

Summary

This book is a non-fiction account of the roles and responsibilities of police officers as well as procedures that police officers follow. Elaborate diagrams depicting various aspects of a police station and a police officer are included. The author explains the types of vehicles used by officers and describes the types of uniforms, including all the equipment normally carried by a police officer. The jobs of specialty officers such as correctional guards, detectives, mounted police, etc. are briefly described, often accompanied by a helpful illustration. Included are descriptions of procedures used by the police in arresting and booking a suspect, and investigating a crime scene. The different ways a person can serve his/her sentence are also described. A broad scope of police life, duties, and procedures are covered in this book as were interesting facts such as the reason people refer to the police as "cops" is because their badges were originally made of copper.

Analysis

This is an excellent introductory book which employs humorous, comic-book like illustrations to assist in conveying information. Although children might be overwhelmed with the wealth of information the book provides, they should develop a positive image of police officers and the jobs they do. Readers should also begin to understand the complexity of law enforcement. The author clearly states that an officer's main duty is to protect and serve the public and that officers fire their guns only as a last resort. She adds that a source of pride for police officers is to retire without ever having to fire their gun in the line of duty.

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American Reading Forum
Membership Information

The American Reading Forum:

The American Reading Forum is a nonprofit, professional organization composed of individuals who share an interest in the improvement of reading. While the American Reading Forum is an organization that facilitates the dissemination of ideas and research, it places highest priority on providing its members opportunities for a critical discussion of ideas, issues, research, and paradigms.

The American Reading Forum's Goals:

The American Reading Forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for reading education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of reading research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
- To provide a yearbook through which scholars of all levels can share viewpoints, resources, and expertise.
- To ensure that in the field of reading no idea is too bold or new to be given a hearing, and none too old to be given reconsideration.

The American Reading Forum's Meeting:

To achieve its goals, ARF sponsors a meeting each year during early December. The program consists of the common conference session formats (e.g., paper sessions, major addresses, and symposia), as well as alternative formats to those generally employed by organizations in the field of reading. To enhance the opportunity for participants' interaction, the American Reading Forum encourages a variety of formats for its sessions. A "Topical Issues Forum," a "Continuous Dialogue Session," and "Mentorship Sessions" are a few of the formats that ARF considers as ways to allow issues and topics to be discussed in depth by those who attend the annual meeting.

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Annual Membership in the American Reading Forum begins in December of the year in which your application is received. All memberships include the annual YEARBOOK, which is received the following December.

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